Signs of substance misuse and addiction

If you or a loved one uses alcohol, prescription painkillers or other habit-forming medications, knowing the signs of abuse can help prevent addiction. Some of these include:

• Becoming preoccupied with getting and using the drug.
• Needing a supply of the drug on hand at all times.
• Needing more of the drug to produce the same level of pain relief or symptom control.
• Engaging in dangerous activities, like driving, while under the influence of the drug.
• Participating in illegal behaviors, such as stealing, to get more of the drug.
• Changes in physical appearance, especially in the area of personal hygiene.
• Doctor shopping to get new prescriptions for the drug.
• Stealing drugs from relatives or friends or asking to use someone else’s prescription.

If you notice any of these symptoms in a loved one, or you think you might be developing a drug dependence, it’s time to do something about it.