



Support for substance use disorder during the pandemic



The rise of alcohol and drug use

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many people in many ways. As of June 2020, 13% of Americans had started or increased substance use as a way of coping with stress or emotions related to COVID-19.¹ And those who were already managing physical, mental health or substance use challenges may have felt disconnected from their support systems or health care providers.

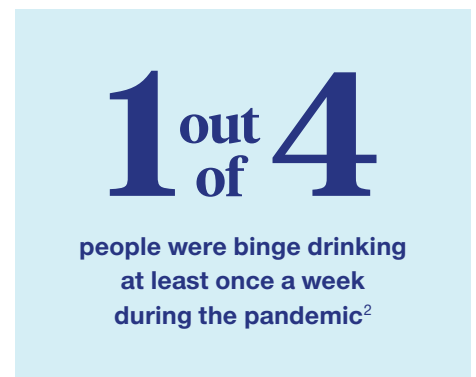
A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study found that:

- One out of 4 people were binge drinking at least once per week²
- One out of 5 people used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons¹
- One out of 7 people had used illicit drugs³

The 12-month period ending in November 2020 saw the highest number of overdose deaths recorded in that time in the U.S.³ Synthetic opioids—like fentanyl, which is 50–100 times more potent than morphine—increased by almost 40% compared to the previous year.⁴

Help and hope are here

If you or a loved one is struggling with substance use, you're not alone. As a UnitedHealthcare member, you and covered family members may have access to resources that may help you learn ways to cope.



Coping in healthier ways

While substance use disorder has been around since long before the COVID-19 pandemic, the uncertainty of the situation may have stirred up more stress and anxiety than usual. How you feel matters. How you learn to cope matters, too. While it may be hard to make changes, reaching out can be a good first step.



Hope and healing may be a phone call away

To connect with specialists trained in addressing substance use disorders, call the Substance Use Disorder Helpline at 1-855-780-5955. It's confidential and available 24/7.

If you or someone you know are experiencing thoughts of suicide or something else that is urgent or an emergency, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Find a provider

Sign in to or register on myuhc.com[®] and go to **Find Care & Costs > Behavioral Health Directory**, or call the phone number on your health plan ID card

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¹ Czeisler ME, Lane RI, Petrosky E. Mental Health, Substance Use, and Suicidal Ideation During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, June 24–30, 2020. CDC MMWR. Published August 2020. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm. Accessed June 2021.

² National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Alcohol Facts and Statistics. Updated June 2021. Accessed June 2021.

³ National Center for Health Statistics. Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts. CDC. Last updated June 16, 2021. Accessed June 23, 2021.

⁴ CDC. What is fentanyl? Last updated Feb. 16, 2021. Accessed June 23, 2021.

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This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 if you are in the United States or the local emergency services phone number if you are outside the United States, or go to the nearest accident and emergency department. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and all its components, in particular services to family members below the age of 16, may not be available in all locations and are subject to change without prior notice. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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