



Preventing Medication and Alcohol Misuse Among Older Adults

TV shows and movies often show a drunken grandpa for laughs. He seems harmless, fumbling around. But there's nothing funny about older people with alcohol problems. They often end up in nursing homes. Some may die from harmful drug and alcohol interactions.

Preventing substance abuse among older adults can be difficult. Sometimes it's hard to tell a problem exists. People may mistake alcohol and drug problems for a bad mood, dementia, or Alzheimer's disease. But knowing what to look for can help.

Symptoms of alcohol or medication problems in older adults include the following:

- Blackouts
- Forgetfulness or trouble concentrating
- Frequent falls and unexplained bruising
- Shakes or tremors
- Constant irritability and altered mood
- Depression or anxiety
- Poor hygiene and self-neglect
- Sleep problems or daytime drowsiness
- Slurred speech
- Tremor, clumsiness, and trouble walking

Alcohol and drugs can interact with each other to cause these symptoms. Also, drugs can interact with each other. Thus, it is crucial to make sure older adults take their medications properly.