



# Alcohol, Drugs, Spinal Cord Injury and You

**QUEENSLAND  
SPINAL CORD INJURIES  
SERVICE (QSCIS)**

[www.health.qld.gov.au/qscis](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qscis)

Alcohol may or may not have played a role in your life prior to spinal cord injury. Asking yourself questions about how you use alcohol and drugs becomes more important when you have a spinal cord injury.

Being honest with yourself and taking responsibility for your use of alcohol and drugs becomes part of taking control of the rest of your life.

When you have a spinal cord injury, abuse of alcohol and drugs can have serious physical consequences such as renal problems and pressure areas, as well as negative psychological consequences such as depression and anxiety. Alcohol and drug abuse can also stress relationships and hurt the people you love during an already stressful period of your lives.

## Some questions to ask yourself about your drug and alcohol use:

- Has the use of alcohol or drugs interfered with my ability to take part in my gym sessions?
- Have I woken up with a hangover?
- Have I used drugs or alcohol to dull my feelings such as anger, fear or pain?
- Have I used drugs or alcohol to avoid thinking?
- Has my behaviour become aggressive towards others or myself?
- Have I put myself in risky situations by using drugs or alcohol?
- Has my behaviour while under the influence upset people close to me?
- Do I feel anxious or depressed before or after I use drugs or alcohol?
- Can I afford to spend the money I do on drugs and alcohol?
- Does it trigger memories of the past?
- Has the use of drugs and alcohol got me in trouble with the law?

## What are the benefits of addressing drug and alcohol issues?

- Finding the strength to face the problems that are really worrying you
- Feeling healthier
- Save money
- Better relationships with the people you love
- Getting the most out of your rehabilitation
- Reducing the risk of life threatening complications
- Clearer head for decision making
- Returning to life, work and reaching other goals

## How to address drug and alcohol issues:

- Ask for help
  - There are specialised trained professionals available to help you both during and after your rehabilitation.
  - Talk to your doctor and social worker.
  - Arrangements can be made to see a specialist from the drug and alcohol unit.
- Be honest with yourself
- Take things one step at a time
- Face the fear
- Tap into your own strengths



### For further information please contact:

The Spinal Injuries Unit  
Phone (07) 3240 2215 or (07) 3240 2641  
OR  
The SIU Consultant on Call  
Through PAH switchboard (after hours)

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