



#hERHealth

A social awareness initiative of Nashik Obgyn society & team 23-24

Addictions in Adolescence



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Adolescence is that period in one's life that links childhood to Adulthood. The age between 10 years to 19 years is considered Adolescence.

Addiction in this phase of life are mainly

- 2 types (1) Substance addiction
 (2) Internet addiction

1) **Substance addiction** – The ones most used are Alcohol, nicotine (in tobacco or vaping products like cigarettes or vapes), cannabis (weed), heroin. Prescription drugs like opioids, fentanyl also deserve a mention

Adolescents fall a prey to substance abuse for a variety of reasons like

- i) Peer pressure
- ii) To feel part of a social group
- iii) To relieve stress and symptoms of mental health disorders (depression, anxiety)
- iv) To seek new experiences and take risks
- v) Lack of Parental monitoring and self-control.

Use among adolescents ranges from sporadic use to severe substance use disorders.

Even occasional use can put adolescents at an increased risk of significant harm including overdose, motor vehicle accidents, violent behaviours and even to consequences of sexual contact (eg- pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases.)

Long term risk include.

- a) Addiction going in to their youth and further affecting their life in adulthood.
- b) Medical diseases for eg: Liver diseases due to alcohol.
- c) Attention deficit disorders: substance abuse leads to lack of concentration
- d) Smoking and vaping can cause lung injuries leading to various medical lung diseases & cancer.

The strongest risk factor for adolescent smoking and drinking are having parents or role models or peers who smoke and drink. Hence children imbibe these things from their role models insistently.

2) **Internet Addiction** - Today it deserves a special mention as internet use is a daily fare and internet addiction has become a reality. It is associated with a variety of psychological and physical health problems. Increase screen time is associated with various issues of the eyes like dryness of eyes, blurred vision even keratoconus. Also easy accessibility to various kinds of data leads to dependability on the same and decreases creativity of the individual. It also leads to lack of concentration and thinking ability. These adolescents have lower academic achievement than non addicts and may have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Constant use of mobiles or internet leads to change in behaviour, carries one away from reality and the individual lives in a virtual world. This leads irritability, violent behaviour & to various kinds of psychological and psychiatric disorders.

The TREATMENT for drug and substance abuse is mostly behavioral therapy often by a behavioral health specialist. Avoidance of peer pressure could help in bringing down these habits to a large extent. Help from family and friends could do a lot of damage control. Many rehabilitation centers today are doing a wonderful job.

Emotional support along with medical therapy can help an adolescent with addictions to curtail them and lead a meaningful healthy life.