

# Substance Use Symptom Checklist

This checklist will help you and your provider understand how using marijuana or other drugs might be affecting your health.

Please think about your life in the last 12 months. Then go through the questions below and answer "yes" or "no" for each one.

In the last 12 months . . .	YES	NO
1. Did using the same amount of the drug have less effect than it used to? Or did you have to use more to feel the effect you wanted? <i>Please answer "yes" if either question is true for you.</i>		
2. Did you have withdrawal symptoms when you weren't using the drug? Or did you use the drug to avoid having these symptoms? <i>Please answer "yes" if either question is true for you.</i>		
3. Did you have times when you used the drug more or for longer than you wanted to?		
4. Did you want to cut back or stop using the drug, but couldn't?		
5. Did you spend a lot of time trying to get the drug, using the drug, or recovering from using it?		
6. Did you continue to use the drug even though you thought it might be causing mental or physical problems- or making them worse?		
7. Did using the drug make it harder for you to keep up with your responsibilities at work, school, or home?		
8. Did you do something dangerous more than once after using the druglike drive a car or operate machinery?		
9. Did you use the drug even though you thought it might be causing problems with your family or other people?		
10. Did you have strong desires or cravings for the drug?		
11. Did you spend less time working, enjoying hobbies, or being with others because of your use of the drug?		
<b>Number of "Yes" responses</b>		

What drugs did you use in the last 12 months?

- Opiates (including heroin)   
  Marijuana or cannabis   
  Meth or other stimulants   
  Cocaine  
 Benzodiazepines or other sedatives   
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(For the health professional)

### Scoring the checklist\*

Each “Yes” answer receives a point. Points are added for a total score that reflects the severity of a possible substance use disorder. The health professional should assess whether symptoms reoccur. If symptoms reoccur, refer to table below:

Score	Category	Indicated action
0 - 1	Symptoms are not consistent with a substance use disorder	Brief education
2 - 3	Symptoms are consistent with <b>mild</b> substance use disorder	Brief intervention using motivational interviewing and harm reduction.
4 - 5	Symptoms are consistent with <b>moderate</b> substance use disorder	
6+	Symptoms are consistent with <b>severe</b> substance use disorder	

Surveys report that most people living with a substance use disorder do not believe they need treatment. The path to accepting treatment for a substance use disorder is usually forged over time and begins with the patient reducing harm from their use and improving their quality of life.

The patient may be willing to brainstorm ways to reduce their harm from substance use, which can include stop using; accepting counseling, medications, or participation in a support group; reducing their use; using more safely; not using multiple substances at once; using in safer environments; getting regular health care. The patient may choose not to change their use.

Below is a four-step model of performing a brief intervention. More info at [www.sbirtoregon.org](http://www.sbirtoregon.org)

### Raise the subject

- “Thanks for filling out this form – is it okay if we briefly talk about your substance use?”
- “Just so you know, my role is to help you assess the risks so you can make your own decisions. I want to help you improve your quality of life on your own timeline.”
- “What can you tell me about your substance use?”

### Share information

- Explain any association between the patient’s use and their health complaint, then ask, “Do you think your use has anything to do with your [anxiety, insomnia, STD, etc.]?”
- Share information about substance use disorder.
- Ask the patient: “What do you think of this information?”

### Enhance motivation

- Ask patient about perceived pros and cons of their use, then summarize what you hear.
- Elicit a goal: “Where do you want to go from here? What’s your goal, or vision?”
- Gauge patient’s readiness/confidence to reach their goal. If using Readiness Ruler: “Why do did you pick that number on a scale of 0-10 instead of \_\_\_\_ [lower number]?”

### Identify plan

- If patient is ready, ask: “What steps do you think you can take to reach your goal?”
- Affirm the patient’s readiness/confidence to meet their goal and affirm their plan.
- “Can we schedule an appointment to check in and see how your plan is going? You may want to change your goal or make a new plan.”

\*Matson TE, Hallgren KA, Lapham GT, et al. Psychometric Performance of a Substance Use Symptom Checklist to Help Clinicians Assess Substance Use Disorder in Primary Care. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2023;6(5):e2316283. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.1628