



IS IT AN ADDICTION?

Addiction

A strong emotional and/or psychological dependence or continued use of a substance, practice, or other things despite harm to oneself or others.

Key Points

- **Moral or ethical objection to something does not mean it is an addiction.**
Addiction is a universal problem that is not limited or exclusively linked to any social, religious, cultural, or economic grouping of people. Because addiction is a universal problem it cannot be properly diagnosed or identified through the “lens” or accepted norms of *one* of these groups. Of course, different groups and even people within these very groups will hold firm to different morals and ethics, but transcending these is a universal problem or disorder we can identify as an addiction. Someone may engage in an activity that you or I may object to on moral grounds, but that does not indicate the activity is an addiction.
- **Not all habitual activities are addictions.**
While addictions consist of frequent and repeated behaviors or impulses, not all frequent and repeated behaviors or impulses are addictions—but instead may simply be routines, traditions, lifestyle, and pastimes.
Common *routines* might include: anything from brushing ones teeth and flossing every morning and evening; taking vitamins three times a day; or putting chapstick throughout the day.
Traditions might include: having tea every afternoon (England); crossing oneself when entering a church (Catholic); or praying to the east five times a day (Islam). Lifestyle choices might include, for example, polygamous marriages which are permitted in nearly a quarter of the countries worldwide (47/193).
Pastimes might include such things as going for a jog every morning, or playing a game of solitaire every night before bed.
While any one of these activities could potentially become an addiction, they are not in and of themselves addictive behaviors regardless of how regular or frequently one engages in them.