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DEFINITION OF ALCOHOLISM

Alcoholism is a chronic, progressive, incurable disease characterized by loss of control over alcohol and other sedatives.

Chronic – it lasts a long time – it is always present.

Progressive – it never gets any better... But, if alcoholics remain clean and dry, the coming months and years will bring remarkable and often miraculous improvements in their spiritual, emotional, physical and social well-being.

Incurable – so far, science has given us no cure for alcoholism. Victims of the disease can return to normal life, but only for as long as drinking is stopped.

Characterized by loss of control over alcohol and other sedatives – once alcoholics take the first drink after being sober or abstinent, they can't predict with any reliability whether they are going to have a normal or abnormal drinking episode. They no longer control alcohol, as most of us do; it controls them.

Alcoholics have lost control over not just the drug alcohol – for alcohol is basically nothing more than a widely available, socially acceptable, non-prescription and inexpensive tranquilizer or sedative- Alcoholics have lost control over all other sedative drugs as well.

Loss of control is a most important clinical factor. Do they have predictable behavior when they drink? If they do, then they're not alcoholic. But if their behavior isn't predictable when they drink – if they simply can't tell what will happen next – then the disease has got them in hand.

There is good news – Alcohol is a disease – and that's the good news. Alcoholism is not the alcoholic's fault – and that's good news, too. Alcoholics can today get proper treatment for the disease, which is certainly good news, and that treatment begins when we tell them these facts.

Alcoholism is the only chronic, incurable and ultimately fatal if unarrested disease from which the majority of victims can expect 100% recovery.

Source: *The Disease of Alcoholism*, David L. Ohlms, MD

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