

THE PROBLEM OF ALCOHOLISM

From the standpoint of health, alcoholism, our fourth greatest health problem, is the most serious problem related to alcohol. About one out of nine people who use alcohol becomes an excessive or problem drinker and faces the risk of becoming an alcoholic. The exact cause of alcoholism is not known except that it does not occur where the consumption of alcohol is not present. Since not all users of beverage alcohol become alcoholics it is thought that alcoholism results from certain personality disorders and organic factors, combined with the consumption of alcohol.

Alcoholics are found in all occupations and all social classes. For them, drinking constitutes a progressive problem which, unless arrested, sooner or later leads to insanity or death. It is estimated that there are approximately 8,000,000 problem drinkers in the United States, of whom some 5,015,000 are alcoholics including probably 1,000,000 who are chronic (organically damaged) alcoholics.

The only sure preventive is TOTAL ABSTINENCE.