



How to track your use

If your goal is to cut-down or stop, one of the best ways you can start to see how much you use is to keep a Substance Use Diary. This will also be handy in the future because it can help you:

- Understand what influences your substance use.
- Keep a record of what you use and when.
- Identify risks and harms; and
- Plan how to avoid and respond to high-risk situations.

You can use the diary in the ASSIST Check-up app or the diary pages below.

Using your Diary

- Keep your diary every day.
- Write it up when you are using or when you feel like using.
- Keep it for at least 3 months. This will help you to see changes.
- Later, you can record 'spot checks' for a week or two every few months.
- Add up the money you've spent on substance use.

- If you like, review your diary with your supporter.
- Highlight 'high-risk times' – when you had a strong urge to use, used more than you meant to or had some things happen that caused you concern.
- Read what you have written and think about what it means for you in terms of how to avoid and reduce risk – ideally you would do this two or three times a week.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF HELPING YOU MAKE CHANGE.

Your diary shows you just what is happening, and when and where change is taking place.

The diary makes it easier for you to spot your "high-risk" situations.

The situations that make you feel like using might be when you are with certain people, or in a certain place. It might also be about how you are feeling – bored, angry or upset, happy and relaxed.

Information in your diary is private. Make sure you keep it in a safe place.

This is important as having a written record of your usage might be used against you in a legal case should the need occur. However, this should not discourage you from using a diary altogether.

You can work out how much you are using now by making a 'Substance Use Diary' of your substance use over the last week.

Start with yesterday. Write down

- The time and place of your substance use.
- Who you were with.
- What you were using.
- How much you had.
- How much you spent.
- Consequences - Good things that happened and not so good things.

Go back over the week a day at a time and write down the information for each day. At the end you will be able to see how much you used in the last week.

You can use My Diary in the ASSIST Check-up app or use the diary on the next page.

Example: Substance Use Diary

This is how John's diary looked the week before he went to the doctor

Situation: When, Where and Who with?	What?	How much did I use?	How much did I spend?	Consequences
Saturday night at Peter's party	Cannabis	6 pipes	\$50	Fell asleep at the party
Sunday did gardening and played soccer in the park	Nothing	N/A	N/A	Felt satisfied and productive
Monday night, tired, relaxed in front of TV at home	Cannabis	2 pipes	None, had some left	Felt guilty because I didn't need to smoke
Tuesday, went to guitar lesson after work, came home late	Nothing	N/A	N/A	Was tired so fell asleep without smoking. Woke up feeling OK.
Wednesday night watched soccer on TV at home	Cannabis	4 pipes	\$40	Enjoyed the night and Spurs won.
Thursday night watched TV at home	Cannabis	4 pipes	None, had some left	Stayed up later than I planned.
Friday night David and Peter came over to watch a movie	Cannabis	5 pipes	\$50	Relaxed but annoyed that I spent my last \$50 until payday

When John looked over the week he was surprised that he had smoked 21 pipes and spent \$140!

John could see that when he was with Peter he tended to smoke more and he smoked more when he started earlier in the evening. When he smoked more was when he had most problems with his family and tended to have a bad day the next day.

Now it's your turn. Fill in the substance use diary below for yourself to see how much you are using, and identify some of the situations where you use the most.

Importantly, pay attention to the consequences and how you feel. This will be important later when you start writing a behavioural contract to cut-down or stop.

Now that you know how to track your use, here are some related sheets that you might also find useful:

[How to stick to your targets](#)

[How to prepare for and respond to a slip](#)

[How to manage a slip](#)

[How to practice mindfulness](#)



