

# Are you ADDICTED to SHOPPING?

Whether you like to look at clothing, housewares, tools, or electronics, shopping is a favorite pastime for many people. As the holidays approach, shopping becomes even more popular. Big sales, special deals, and promotions all seek to get more people to buy, buy, buy.

But for some people, shopping is more than just fun around the holidays. It can actually be an addiction, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

## Signs of Shopping Addiction

Many people think addiction is only for drugs and alcohol. But many behaviors including shopping can become an addiction. Access to online shopping can make the problem worse. You can buy whatever you want from the privacy of your home and just a few mouse clicks.

It can be difficult to know if you just like to shop, or if it's really a problem. *If three or more of these statements apply to you, you may be addicted to shopping:*

- You frequently buy things you don't need.
- You have many unopened packages of items or clothing with the tags still on.
- You purchase things you can't afford by using credit cards.
- You hide your purchases from your spouse or family.
- You feel a strong need to shop when you're sad, angry, or anxious.
- You have secret credit cards or open new cards when others ones are maxed out.
- You think obsessively about shopping and money.
- You buy much more than planned, and feel guilty or ashamed afterward.
- Your relationships with family or friends have been affected by your shopping.

