

# Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10)

The Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10) is a 10-item brief screening tool that can be administered by a clinician or self-administered. Each question requires a yes or no response, and the tool can be completed in less than 8 minutes. This tool assesses drug use, not including alcohol or tobacco use, in the past 12 months.

 **by Stephen Miller**



Drug Assessment  
questionnaire

# Introduction to DAST-10

I'm going to read you a list of questions concerning information about your potential involvement with drugs, excluding alcohol and tobacco, during the past 12 months.

When the words "drug abuse" are used, they mean the use of prescribed or over-the-counter medications/drugs in excess of the directions and any non-medical use of drugs. The various classes of drugs may include: cannabis (e.g., marijuana, hash), solvents, tranquilizers (e.g., Valium), barbiturates, cocaine, stimulants (e.g., speed), hallucinogens (e.g., LSD) or narcotics (e.g., heroin). Remember that the questions do not include alcohol or tobacco.

If you have difficulty with a statement, then choose the response that is mostly right. You may choose to answer or not answer any of the questions in this section.

# DAST-10 Questionnaire

## (Questions 1-5)

These questions refer to the past 12 months:

1.	Have you used drugs other than those required for medical reasons?	0	1
2.	Do you abuse more than one drug at a time?	0	1
3.	Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want to? (If never use drugs, answer "Yes.")	1	0
4.	Have you had "blackouts" or "flashbacks" as a result of drug use?	0	1
5.	Do you ever feel bad or guilty about your drug use? If never use drugs, choose "No."	0	1



# DAST-10 Questionnaire (Questions 6-10)

6.	Does your spouse (or parents) ever complain about your involvement with drugs?	0	1
7.	Have you neglected your family because of your use of drugs?	0	1
8.	Have you engaged in illegal activities in order to obtain drugs?	0	1
9.	Have you ever experienced withdrawal symptoms (felt sick) when you stopped taking drugs?	0	1
10.	Have you had medical problems as a result of your drug use (e.g., memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, bleeding, etc.)?	0	1

In these statements, the term "drug abuse" refers to the use of medications at a level that exceeds the instructions, and/or any non-medical use of drugs. Patients receive 1 point for every "yes" answer with the exception of question #3, for which a "no" answer receives 1 point.

# Interpreting the DAST-10

DAST-10 Score Degree of Problems Related to Drug Abuse Suggested Action.

DAST-10 Score	Degree of Problems Related to Drug Abuse	Suggested Action
0	No problems reported	None at this time
1-2	Low level	Monitor, re-assess at a later date
3-5	Moderate level	Further investigation
6-8	Substantial level	Intensive assessment
9-10	Severe level	Intensive assessment

# Understanding Drug Classes in DAST-10

The DAST-10 considers various classes of drugs that may include:

1

## **Cannabis**

Examples include marijuana and hash

2

## **Solvents**

Various chemical substances that can be inhaled or consumed

3

## **Tranquilizers**

Examples include Valium and other benzodiazepines

4

## **Barbiturates**

Sedative medications that depress the central nervous system

5

## **Stimulants**

Examples include cocaine and speed (amphetamines)

6

## **Hallucinogens**

Examples include LSD and other psychedelic substances

7

## **Narcotics**

Examples include heroin and other opioids

Remember that the DAST-10 questions do not include alcohol or tobacco use.

# Administering the DAST-10

## Time Required

The DAST-10 can be completed in less than 8 minutes, making it an efficient screening tool in clinical settings.

## Administration Methods

The tool can be administered by a clinician through interview format or self-administered by the patient.

## Response Format

Each question requires a simple yes or no response, making it accessible and straightforward for patients.

The DAST-10 is designed to assess drug use in the past 12 months, providing clinicians with valuable information about potential substance use issues that may require further assessment or intervention.

# Recommendations Based on DAST-10 Results

Based on the DAST-10 score, healthcare providers can make appropriate recommendations tailored to the severity of drug use issues. These recommendations provide a starting point for intervention planning.

Score Range	Severity Level	Detailed Recommendations
0	No problems reported	No intervention needed. Provide education on substance use prevention and healthy coping strategies.
1-2	Low level	Brief advice on risks of drug use. Schedule follow-up assessment in 6-12 months. Provide educational materials on substance use.
3-5	Moderate level	Brief intervention focusing on motivation to change. Consider referral to counseling services. Evaluate for co-occurring mental health conditions.
6-8	Substantial level	Refer for specialized substance use assessment. Consider outpatient treatment programs. Evaluate for medical complications related to drug use.
9-10	Severe level	Immediate referral to specialized substance use treatment. Evaluate need for medical detoxification. Consider inpatient treatment options based on comprehensive assessment.

## Clinical Considerations

When making recommendations based on DAST-10 results, clinicians should consider:

- Patient's readiness to change and engagement in treatment
- Presence of co-occurring mental or physical health conditions
- Available support systems and resources
- Previous treatment history and response
- Specific substances being used and patterns of use

Remember that the DAST-10 is a screening tool, not a diagnostic instrument. Comprehensive assessment by qualified healthcare professionals is necessary before determining definitive treatment recommendations.



# Source and Additional Information

The Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10) is available through the National Institute on Drug Abuse website:  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/nidamed-medical-health-professionals>

This screening tool was developed by H. A. Skinner in 1982 and published in the journal *Addictive Behavior*, Volume 7, Issue 4, pages 363–371.

Skinner, H. A. (1982). The Drug Abuse Screening Test. *Addictive Behavior*, 7(4),363–371.

The DAST-10 provides healthcare professionals with a validated method to identify potential drug abuse problems and determine appropriate next steps for patient care.