

*I can stay sober quite a while between binges; how can I tell whether I need A.A.?*

Most A.A.s will say that it's how you drink, not how often, that determines whether or not you are an alcoholic. Many problem drinkers can go weeks, months, and occasionally years between their bouts with liquor. During their periods of sobriety, they may not give alcohol a second thought. Without mental or emotional effort, they are able to take it or leave it alone, and they prefer to leave it alone. Then, for some unaccountable reason, or for no reason at all, they go off on a first-class binge. They neglect job, family, and other civic and social responsibilities. The spree may last a single night, or it may be prolonged for days or weeks. When it is over, the drinker is usually weak and remorseful, determined never to let it happen again. But it does happen again. This type of "periodic" drinking is baffling, not only to those around the drinker, but also to the person still drinking. He or she cannot understand why there should be so little interest in alcohol during the periods between binges, or so little control over it once the drinking starts. The periodic drinker may or may not be an alcoholic. But if drinking has become unmanageable and if the periods between binges are becoming shorter, chances are the time has come to face up to the problem. If the person is ready to admit to being an alcoholic, then the first step has been taken toward the continuing sobriety enjoyed by thousands upon thousands of A.A.s.