According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, about six million women are dependent on alcohol in the U.S. and about 2.6 million women have substance abuse issues. It is hard to tell whether more women are abusing alcohol and other substance than in the past, because women have always felt stigmatized by their drinking and drug habits and are likely to keep their issues a secret.

It is important to note, though, that the number of arrests of women for DUI rose a startling 30 percent between 1998 and 2007, indicating that substance abuse is a growing problem among women.

What puts a woman at risk for developing a dependency on alcohol or drugs?

- Violence: In a study on substance abuse in women, 74 percent of addicted women reported sexual abuse and 52 percent reported physical abuse in their personal histories. Women who grew up in violent homes and those who continued on to violent domestic situations are much more likely to turn to alcohol and drugs to cope with their dysfunctional circumstances.
- Emotional abuse or marginalization: Women who feel trapped in relationships where a lack of empathy and an unequal distribution of household responsibilities are defining factors are also likely to seek ways to numb the pain of feeling under-appreciated. They turn to alcohol and drugs to help them to feel in control of their own happiness, to give them a sense of power, comfort and relief from confusion and depression over their unfair relationship dynamic. Also, women who grew up feeling stigmatized for their gender, or who felt disrespected for being female, were likely to develop addictions.
- Isolation: Women who feel lonely or isolated, most notably mothers who spend every day caring for their children without any significant adult to adult contact, usually begin using substances in ways that seem to help them make connections, feel energized, social and loved. For example, a mom might initially begin drinking wine in the evenings with friends or at play dates, only to find herself seeking it earlier and earlier in the day, and getting more and more intoxicated by the evening. What begins as a social activity can quickly spiral into a problem among women who feel that their sense of belonging and companionship is connected to their substance use.

While drugs and liquor are still considered among women as things to be ashamed of, wine has become a trend.

Many moms feel like, by drinking wine, they're not really using a substance. They are simply participating in a liberating subculture. Some moms, in particular, don't want to feel like they've had all the fun and freedom squeezed out of their lives by having children, and they don't have appropriate ways to deal with the loss of their former lives. These women don't feel comfortable turning to drugs, but they do recognize that wine is accepted as a woman's drink, and that no one would look twice at a mom with a glass of wine in her hand at the end of a long day.

Monotony at home can exacerbate a substance problem, making even the most mundane

errands a trigger for addicted women. A trip to the grocery store with an exhausted toddler can turn into a seemingly inescapable reason to drink.

There is nothing wrong with unwinding with a glass of Cabernet in the evening, as long as you're not at a high risk for dependence. In fact, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) says that one drink per day is safe for most women.

If you're finding yourself drinking more as time goes on, or earlier in the day, or if the thought of getting through a day without a drink seems unbearable, you might want to seek help for your drinking.

Visit the NIAAA's website for to find out more about whether your habits are healthy, and how to get help if you feel like your substance use has become a problem.

To learn the Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol Abuse, click here.

Source: http://www.voxxi.com/drinking-substance-abuse-women/#ixzz28tfK6n64