



# Drug & Alcohol Detox: Beginning Stages of Addiction Treatment

If you've tried to detox on your own and failed, you are not alone. The good news is that research shows those who commit to a rehabilitation program can succeed.

Get Help Today



[www.cyclesofchangerecovery.com](http://www.cyclesofchangerecovery.com)

# Drug & Alcohol Detoxification: What is Detox?

Drugs and alcohol warp the way your body regulates itself. When you decide to break free from the self-destructive cycle of addiction, you may begin experiencing withdrawal symptoms within hours or 1-2 days. These are part of your body's struggle to begin regulating itself without the influence of drugs. This process, called detoxification (or detox), can be difficult, but it's important to remember that it is both temporary and necessary to regain control of your life.

Before you begin any detox process, you should consult a medical doctor to determine which kind is right for you: medical or sub-acute.

## What is Medical Detox?

Certain drugs may have stronger withdrawal symptoms than others. Some of the symptoms could lead to serious complications without medical supervision and intervention.

When speaking with your doctor, they will consider the following factors (and potentially others) before making a treatment recommendation:

- Age
- Physical health
- Body type
- Drug(s) abused
- Length and severity of addiction
- Potential behavioral issues



If you are at risk for more serious discomfort and withdrawal symptoms, medical detox provides you with around-the-clock medical supervision. You may also be given medication in order to reduce pain or treat severe symptoms. This process can take anywhere from a few days to a couple weeks.

## What is Sub-Acute Detox?

In less severe cases, you might be able to use a sub-acute detox facility like the one at Cycles of Change. Sub-acute detox still provides you with supervision and a controlled environment, but you are typically allowed more freedom. You can move about the facilities, take walks outside, participate in group and individual therapy and generally have more interaction with the world. As with medical detox, your timetable can range from a few days to a couple of weeks.

Generally speaking, while detoxing from heroin, you may experience flu-like symptoms for 1-2 days. Cocaine withdrawals can include depression and restlessness lasting 7-10 days.

Alcohol detox may take 3 days to several weeks and can cause the following symptoms:

- Headaches
- Tremors
- Seizures
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Some individuals withdrawing from alcohol may experience delirium tremens (DTs) which is a more severe reaction including convulsions and hallucinations.

# Detoxing from Alcohol

If you are dependent on alcohol or other drugs, it doesn't take long for your body to notice you've stopped consuming that substance. Once you've become both mentally and physically reliant on something, it takes some time to adjust to its absence in your system. This period of adjustment is commonly referred to as detox (or detoxification).

Withdrawal symptoms often surface during the detox process and range in severity. But if you do experience them, it's important to remember they're temporary. They're an unpleasant but sometimes necessary part of the recovery process.

It's also important to keep in mind that everyone responds to detox and withdrawal differently. There are a number of factors that influence how you respond including length of addiction, severity of addiction and availability of home and social support (among others).

## What It's Like to Detox from Alcohol

Alcohol withdrawal (which usually lasts between 5-7 days) can be a life-threatening condition that can cause some serious problems. It's recommended that individuals addicted to alcohol get the help of a qualified treatment center. By engaging the help of professionals, those seeking assistance can gain access to a number of prescription medications that can help minimize the severity of the following side effects associated with detoxing from alcohol.

### Alcohol withdrawal symptoms include:

- Headache
- Trembling
- Cravings
- Sweating
- Nausea/vomiting
- Problems sleeping

Some individuals (about 1 in 20 who experience withdrawal) will experience delirium tremens (DTs), a more severe reaction to giving up alcohol.

### Symptoms of DTs include:

- Agitation
- Confusion
- Delirium (seeing/hearing things that aren't really there)
- Disorientation
- Extreme anxiety
- Convulsions
- Dehydration



# Detoxing from Heroin

Heroin addiction is a powerful, complex disease, but it is treatable. Withdrawal symptoms are an unpleasant part of the process, but they are necessary as your body learns to regulate itself normally again. Most importantly, you don't have to go through this alone.

## Heroin Withdrawal Timeline

Within 6-12 hours of your last dose, you may begin experiencing early withdrawal symptoms. They generally peak in severity for a couple of days before subsiding over the course of the next week or two. However, this can vary greatly from person to person. Factors that could impact your timeline (as well as the severity of the symptoms) are:

- Age
- Body type
- Physical health
- Length of addiction
- Amount of heroin used
- Other drugs used



# What It Feels Like to Detox from Heroin

Because heroin often leaves the user feeling euphoric and completely relaxed, there tends to be a lot of anxiety when thinking about life without the drug. Some users may even worry that giving it up could be fatal. While detoxing from heroin isn't usually life-threatening on its own, some of the withdrawal symptoms can have potentially fatal complications. You may experience a variety of flu-like symptoms that range in severity.

### Some of the possible symptoms include:

- Chills
- Sweating
- Fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Muscle spasms, cramps and aches

### You might also experience:

- Intense cravings for the drug
- Rapid or impaired breathing
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Hypertension or high blood pressure

Some of these symptoms can lead to serious complications—even death. The failure rate for those who try to detox on their own is extraordinarily high. For these reasons, it is highly recommended that you seek the help of a detox center staffed by medical and mental health professionals. They will be able to monitor your progress and adjust treatment as needed to ensure the smoothest process possible.

This might sound a bit frightening, but it's important to remember that detoxing and withdrawal symptoms are only temporary. You are freeing yourself from an addiction that can lead to liver disease, collapsed veins, heart and lung problems, brain damage or death. On the road to recovery, you can regain joy and fulfillment from the things that brought you those feelings before heroin addiction took control of your life.

# Detoxing from Cocaine

Cocaine addiction can take hold from your first experience with the drug. Unlike other drugs that are physically addictive such as alcohol and heroin, cocaine is psychologically addictive. It's second-only to methamphetamine in regards to strength of dependency. With the highs lasting just 15-30 minutes, you're more likely to binge with it. The more and faster you use it, the stronger that dependency becomes.

When those feelings of euphoria fade, you might find yourself irritated, uncomfortable or depressed. You may end up using more of the drug just to avoid these unpleasant feelings because you think this is how life without cocaine must feel all the time. Thankfully, that's not the case. You're just experiencing the early stages of detoxification—that is your body's way of adjusting to the absence of cocaine in your system. Given enough time and proper support, these feelings can subside, and you can have a healthier, happier life.

## What Does Cocaine Detox Feel Like?

When your body begins adjusting to a lack of cocaine, you may experience a number of side effects. Depending on various factors including length and severity of your addiction, mood disorders and personal background, you may have a completely different experience from someone else in recovery.

Because cocaine addiction is a mental issue instead of a physical one, you won't have some of the more physical reactions common to alcohol or heroin detox like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. However, it can take longer to shake these mentally motivated symptoms:

- Agitation and restlessness
- Depressed mood
- Lethargy or fatigue
- General feelings of discomfort
- Vivid, unpleasant dreams
- Intense cravings for cocaine



These symptoms are not life-threatening, but if you remain unassisted during this trying time, your chances for relapse or overdose are dramatically higher than those of someone in a treatment program.

## How Long Does Cocaine Detox Last?

It's important to seek guidance from a medical doctor to determine the severity of your addiction. While no two addictions are exactly the same, a general timeline for a less severe cocaine detox is 1-3 weeks.

Your first few hours may have you feeling irritable or anxious with an increased appetite. However, your desire for more cocaine might actually decrease at this point. In the coming days and weeks, intense cravings for the drug may arise. You may find yourself struggling to sleep despite feeling tired. Concentration may prove difficult during this time. 2-3 weeks from your last usage may find these feelings subsiding as you return to a healthier frame of mind. The occasional craving can still arise as well as some anxiety.

# Detoxing from Prescription Opioid Painkillers

Painkillers, opioids and other drugs take a significant toll on your body, and there is an adjustment period where it has to relearn how to regulate itself. Many people struggling with drug addiction—whether it's painkillers, alcohol, heroin or any other addictive substance—have likely already felt some early withdrawal symptoms.

It's not a pleasant feeling, and anxiety over these symptoms continuing or getting worse can drive a person deeper into addiction. It's important for you to know that these feelings and symptoms won't last forever, and you don't have to go through this process alone.

## How Painkillers & Opioids Affect the Body

The reasons for taking that critical first step towards sobriety are many. Painkiller addiction has increased sharply in recent decades due to greater availability and social acceptance regarding use of the drugs. As a result, drug overdose deaths more than tripled since 1999, and in 2008, more people died due to opioid abuse than from heroin and cocaine combined.

Opioids compromise your immune system which can lead to more infections. A commonly known side effect of painkillers is constipation which can lead to stomach and intestinal issues. Your hormones are affected, too. You may have experienced a lower sex drive, hot flashes, weight gain or depression. Hormonal imbalances can also lead to infertility and bone loss.

Painkillers can have a profound effect on your brain, too—particularly the part that governs self-control. There aren't many people who begin taking painkillers with the goal of becoming addicted, and most heroin users have a history of opioid abuse first.

## What Does Opioid Detox Feel Like?

You may have tried to quit using on your own before and failed. That's okay. Most people who attempt to go through detox on their own find themselves in the same position. Withdrawal symptoms are a big obstacle to overcome. Even with a proper support system in place, it can be a major challenge.

### Some of the more common opioid withdrawal symptoms are:

- Muscle aches
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Trouble sleeping
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Intense drug cravings



## Drug & Alcohol Detox Near Palmdale, California

Cycles of Change is California's premier opioid rehab treatment center. It's our mission to help you regain control of your life. Our experienced team will develop a personalized treatment to meet your individual needs. We strive to lessen your pain and discomfort during this difficult process, so you can gain the knowledge, courage and determination to pursue a happier, healthier, drug-free life.

### At Cycles of Change, our team in Palmdale includes:

- Licensed clinical psychologists
- Family therapists
- Medical staff
- Other industry professionals dedicated to helping you succeed



We will meet with you and discuss your personalized treatment plan. The initial evaluation will help determine any substances currently in your system, co-occurring disorders and behavioral health issues. Then, our detox team will explain what you can expect during treatment and recovery. Once that process is complete, you will move into a residential rehabilitation program that fits your needs. Throughout it all, our team will be with you to provide the support and encouragement you need to complete your journey to a renewed life.

If you've tried to detox on your own and failed, you are not alone. The good news is that research shows those who commit to a rehabilitation program can succeed. They do it every day! We care about you and want to see you succeed. Take that first step, and contact us today.

**877.854.5784**