



COVID-19 Home Detox Resource



Interior Health
Every person matters

IH-PH-COV-476 29Apr2020

This resource does not replace the advice of a health-care provider.

Adapted with permission from:

**Vancouver
Coastal Health**
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Introduction

At this time, you may not have access to your substance of choice and are experiencing detox at home. We recognize that people use drugs for many different reasons, and that you may be feeling anxious, frustrated and maybe even unwell at this moment. This document was created in an attempt to give you some control and comfort, in a time of uncertainty.



Your **health-care provider**¹ can support you during your detox journey and can direct you to the services that will continue to support you after you have completed your withdrawal.

Having positive, supportive people in your life can be helpful in this time.

These people are family and friends who will help

¹ Within this document, health-care provider refers to a doctor or nurse practitioner.

encourage you through your withdrawal. You might have some family and friends who may be triggering or unsupportive in this time. If this is the case, and you are able, you may find it necessary to take a “time out” from these people in order for you to stay focused on your needs throughout this process. If they care about you, they will respect your decision and allow you the time you need to get well.



What is “Detoxing?”

Detoxing or withdrawal is a physiological process of the body ridding itself of the harmful substances, as well as the healing process of the body re-adapting to be able to function without those substances. Substances have many harmful effects on our bodies. When we stop using, our body needs time to heal and it is during this time that our bodies eliminate toxins. Once this is completed, you will begin to feel better.

What is Withdrawal Management?




It is the medical and emotional support provided by health-care professionals to help safely manage a person's withdrawal symptoms and minimize any associated risks. Medications may, or may not be prescribed to help relieve some of the withdrawal symptoms.



IMPORTANT:

Unsupported home withdrawal for alcohol, benzodiazepines, and opioids is not advised; connect with your health-care provider prior to beginning detox from these substances. Due to the life-threatening nature of alcohol and benzodiazepine withdrawal, facility-based withdrawal management may be essential. For opioids, opioid substitution therapy (i.e. Suboxone or Methadone) is recommended as withdrawal alone has a high risk of relapse and death.



Different substances affect the body in different ways. There are some substances such as alcohol and benzodiazepines that are central nervous system **depressants**. Others such as crystal meth and cocaine are powerful **stimulants**. Opioids such as heroin, and Fentanyl (a narcotic pain medication) are both powerful depressants. These different substances produce different withdrawal symptoms, most often the exact opposite of the effects of the substance.

You may find some of our “tips” helpful in getting you through your withdrawal. The tips provided in this booklet are meant to be a suggestion, as others have found them helpful during their withdrawal period.

Remember, it is always important to talk to a health-care professional about your withdrawal management and to follow their advice. If you have any concerns during this period about your withdrawal, please contact your health-care provider.

Managing Withdrawal



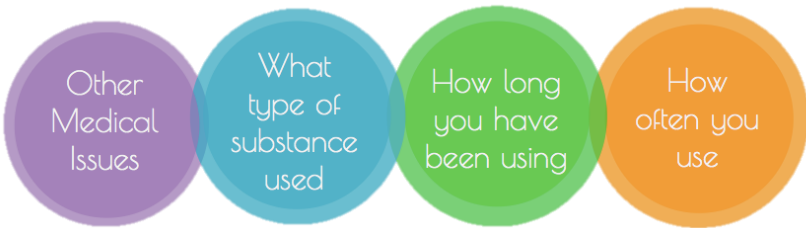
Withdrawal is different for every individual. There are many factors affecting what your own experience will look like and what symptoms you will have. The most important thing to know is that you are not alone. Your health-care provider will guide you through your withdrawal.

Effects of Substances



Substances have an impact on your core body functions such as breathing, your heart rate, consciousness, as well as your mental health. This is why you may experience anxiety and restlessness when the substance is removed. We will discuss how to manage your symptoms in the next few pages.

Withdrawal from a Substance is Dependent on Many Different Things:



Withdrawal symptoms range anywhere from mild to severe:

- Mild (upset stomach, nausea, tremors)
- Severe (seizures, hallucinations)

This is why it is important to be assessed by a medical professional (doctor, nurse practitioner) prior to detoxing.

Some people can manage withdrawal at home, while others must be monitored in a facility-based detox

setting with 24-hour observation by medical professionals for safety.

For some people, these symptoms appear unmanageable. We urge you to read through the following tips to get through this period, because it is important to remember that the symptoms are temporary. Also keep in mind that you may experience some or none of these symptoms.

Common Withdrawal Symptoms



Vomiting
& Nausea



Loss
of Appetite



Insomnia,
Anxiety &
Restlessness



Diarrhea
or
Constipation



Headaches



Sweating
or
Chills



Watery Eyes
&
Runny Nose



Muscle
&
Bone Aches



Changes in Heart
Rate or Blood
Pressure



Abdominal
Cramps



Tremors or
shaking



Seizures or
Hallucinations
Emergency: Call 9-1-1

Nausea/Vomiting: Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate!

We know that keeping down fluids may be hard, but it is important that you keep yourself hydrated.



When you are nauseated or vomiting, you are either not wanting to drink fluids or are losing fluids from vomiting. This means you are at risk of losing large amounts of body fluids and electrolytes, which are important in keeping your body's organs functioning.

Sports drinks (Gatorade) or flat ginger ale can help decrease your nausea and increase your body's fluid level. Jell-O powder mixed in warm water is also another great way to decrease nausea and help settle your stomach. Try to sip on broth soups and minimize eating spicy food at this time. Anti-nausea medications are also useful in controlling extreme cases of vomiting. Please let your health-care provider know if you need to use these medications.

Diarrhea: When you are experiencing diarrhea, your body's fluid level is being decreased, which can increase your risk of becoming dehydrated. Again, staying hydrated by drinking clear fluids (such as water or apple juice) is very important.

Refrain from eating/drinking dairy and try eating bananas, rice or bread instead. If you are experiencing heavy diarrhea, you can also consider taking an anti-diarrheal (i.e. Imodium). Be sure to read the medication instructions, as taking too much can make you constipated.



Constipation: Some individuals may experience constipation while withdrawing from substances.

Again, hydration is important.



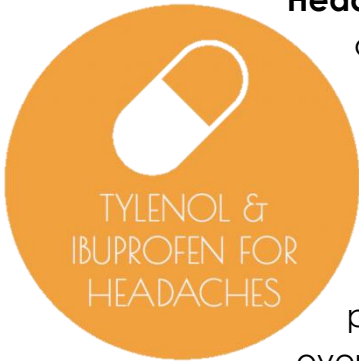
Increase your fluid intake and minimize dehydrating drinks (example: caffeinated coffee and tea). Drinking juice is known to help too! If you are still constipated, you can try using a medication to help (i.e. Lactulose or PEG 3350).

Insomnia: Often individuals have problems with falling or staying asleep when they are withdrawing. There are some natural sleep remedies that can help you get through this. Limiting your caffeine intake during the day, drinking warm milk with honey, and drinking decaffeinated tea can help you increase your body's

natural sleep chemicals and relax. Avoid watching TV or reading your tablet or phone prior to bed. The bright lights can affect your circadian rhythm (sleep rhythm). Try deep breathing and meditation before bed. If you are still having difficulty with sleep, using Melatonin can help regulate your sleep/wake cycle.



Headaches, fullness in the head. People often experience headaches when withdrawing from substances. A dimly lit, quiet environment can help, as can an ice pack. Staying hydrated can help to prevent headaches. If the headaches persist or are too troublesome, an over-the-counter analgesic such as Ibuprofen or Tylenol can help. Your health-care provider can recommend what medications to use.



Tremors: Relaxation techniques mentioned above have proven to be helpful with reducing tremors. If required, your health-care provider can prescribe medication to help reduce the tremors. If your tremors become more severe, please inform your health-care provider.



Muscle Aches/Chills: Many clients have found relief from aches and pain by taking Epsom salt baths. This is also referred to as a thermal detox. A hot bath with Epsom salts promotes deep tissue healing and relaxes muscles. If your muscle pain becomes severe, over-the-counter

analgesics (i.e. Tylenol or Ibuprofen) may also be helpful.

Agitation/Anxiety: Many clients report that they feel agitated or anxious during their withdrawal. During this time, the body is re-learning how to cope without a substance and so is your mind. When you were using, and a problem or uncomfortable situation arose, you may have

drowned that feeling with a substance. When you stop using, it becomes important to start re-learning coping strategies to work through unpleasant feelings and situations.



Relaxation therapies such as listening to soft music, taking a hot bath, deep breathing, meditation, or taking a walk are helpful ways to relax you. Other people have found it helpful to read a book, talk to a supportive person, or attend a support meeting. If

these feelings become severe, please inform your health-care provider.

Seizures and Hallucinations: If you have a history of withdrawal that includes having experienced hallucinations or seizures, it would be considered unsafe to undertake withdrawal at home. Your withdrawal would require medical monitoring in an inpatient setting. If you do begin to experience hallucinations or



seizures, call Emergency Services (911) and contact your health-care provider.

What Happens after Detox?

There are many options following the physical detox part of your recovery journey. This may be a time where you reflect on how you want to move forward with your substance use, whether that is changes in how you use drugs, or stopping use. Make your goals known to your care provider so they can support you. You can consider some of the following options if you are unsure of where to start and review



the Substance Use Resources page on the Interior Health website for what is available in your region.

Day Treatment Programs: Outpatient intensive treatment programs ranging from six to 12 weeks, which offer a range of program activities such as psycho-educational groups, counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy and more to support your recovery.

Facility-Based Treatment Services: Safe, substance-free, live-in settings that provide structured, time-limited programs for individuals whose assessment indicates they would benefit from intensive treatment. Some examples of services provided include individual and group therapy, psycho-social education and life-skills training. Programs may also provide medical, nursing or psychiatric support.

Adult Support Recovery: A substance-free, live-in setting that provides time-limited supports and services for clients in recovery who require a longer term structured environment while preparing to transition into a more stable lifestyle.

Transitional Services: Temporary, substance-free, live-in settings for individuals who are experiencing substance-use problems and require short- to medium-term supports from one to 30 days. Clients may be transitioning into or out of live-in treatment/recovery settings, awaiting housing, or need help developing an adequate plan for their continued recovery.

Self-Help Programs: Groups in which individuals, in recovery from their own substance-use problems, meet regularly in the community to share their experience, strength and hope, and support each other in recovery.

Counselling and Treatment Services: Opportunities in which professionals listen and work with you to identify patterns, help you develop a plan to reach your goals, and better understand yourself. Many find that counselling is helpful in identifying individual strengths, tap into existing resources, and also create new ones.

Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT): Opioid Agonist Treatment is the recommended treatment for Opioid Use Disorder. OAT involves an opioid agonist medication prescribed and monitored by a health-care provider. The primary medications used are Suboxone and Methadone.



We understand that there are often many more questions that you may have regarding where to go or what to do after detox. That is why connecting with your health-care provider is important. They may be able to direct you to resources or support referrals to services on your behalf. Additionally please visit the resource websites listed below or contact your local Interior Health Mental Health and Substance Use centre.

Substance Use Services:

www.interiorhealth.ca

- > Your Care
- > Mental Health and Substance Use
- > Substance Use

Substance Use Resources:

www.interiorhealth.ca

- > Your Care
- > Mental Health and Substance Use
- > Substance Use
- > Substance Use Resources

Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) Providers:

www.interiorhealth.ca

- > Your Care
- > Mental Health and Substance Use
- > Substance Use
- > Substance Use Resources
- > Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) Clinics & Providers

BC Centre on Substance Use, Clinical Care Guidance:

www.bccsu.ca

- > Clinical Care Guidance

Appendix A: Possible Shopping List

Nausea/Vomiting:

- Water
- Sports drinks (i.e. Gatorade)
- Ginger ale
- Jell-o Powder
- Broth Soups
- Anti-nausea medication

Diarrhea:

- Water
- Apple Juice
- Bananas
- Rice
- Bread
- Anti-Diarrheal (i.e. Imodium)

Constipation:

- Water
- Fruit Juice
- Constipation Medication (i.e. Lactulose or PEG 3350)

Insomnia:

- Milk
- Honey
- Decaffeinated Tea
- Melatonin

Headaches:

- Water
- Over-the-Counter Analgesic (i.e. Tylenol or Ibuprofen)

Muscle Aches/Chills:

- Epsom Salts
- Over-the-Counter Analgesic (i.e. Tylenol or Ibuprofen)



Know that you are not alone.

British Columbia Crisis Line: 1-800-663-1441

Interior Crisis Line Network: 1-888-353-2273

www.InteriorHealth.ca



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