

Treatment after Detoxification

Detoxification is the very first step in stopping drinking. You will require follow-on help and support to maintain self-restraint. This can include assistance from the Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service, but other services and supports can be very beneficial.

Support groups and contact details

AA UK 24 hour Helpline	0845 7697555
AA Local Meetings	01452 418515
Drink Line	0800 9178282
NHS Direct	0845 4647
Frank Helpline	0800 776600

Independence Trust (formerly GDAS)

Gloucester	01452 876440
Cheltenham	01242 584881
Stroud	01453 755711
Forest of Dean	01594 825656

Aftercare for supporters

We believe that the process of stopping drinking is not only difficult for you but also for your close relatives and friends. Staff at the Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service are able to provide some short-term 'couples work' to support your recovery and can give you details of other agencies that can help with family and relationship problems.

Countywide Specialist Substance Misuse Service

West Gloucestershire Team	01452 891260
East Gloucestershire Team	01242 845614
Criminal Justice Drugs Team	01452 545779
Branchlea Cross	01242 845600

Support groups and contact details

Al-Anon Family Groups	020 74030888
www.al-anonuk.org.uk	
Email: enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk	
Families Anonymous	0845 1200660
www.famanon.org.uk	
Email: office@famanon.org.uk	
Dry Out Now	0845 3700203
www.dryoutnow.com	
Email: freeadvice@dryoutnow.com	



Guidelines for Home Detoxification from Alcohol

What is home detoxification?

The home alcohol detoxification process enables people who are physically dependant on alcohol to withdraw from alcohol in their own homes or through community clinics.

Home alcohol detoxification needs to be planned carefully. Before your detox begins you and your supporter will meet with your Community Nurse, usually at your home to agree on dates when the detoxification will happen.

Whilst withdrawing from alcohol you are visited daily for the first three days by a professional health care worker. The frequency of visits will depend on your progress and how you are coping.

Your health care worker will monitor withdrawal symptoms, offer support and will liaise with your doctor about your detoxification medication.

What are alcohol withdrawal symptoms?

The physical withdrawal symptoms from alcohol normally last three to five days and most symptoms are over after seven days.

The most common symptoms occur approximately eight hours after stopping drinking. These may include shaking, irritability, restlessness, sweating and vomiting.

Between 48 hours and 72 hours after stopping drinking there is a very small risk of severe withdrawal symptoms such as epileptic-type fits and delirium tremens (DTs).

These are usually prevented by medication but, if they do occur, you should seek emergency medical help.

What medication is used?

- Chlordiazepoxide reduces the withdrawal symptoms and is taken over a period of seven to ten days as part of the reducing regime. It is not recommended for longer periods.
- Thiamine and/or vitamin injections help prevent brain and nerve damage.
- Acamprosate is used to help prevent craving and relapse. It is best started before detox or at the beginning of a programme to help stabilise the brain during detox. It is not recommended for pregnant women and has not been tested for safety in people over 65.
- Antabuse can be started during detoxification, usually from day three onwards. It is a very effective drug that will prevent relapse. Please see the Antabuse leaflet for more details.

Diet and fluid intake during detoxification

Due to excessive sweating and possible vomiting it is important to drink plenty of fluids such as water, squash or milk during the detoxification. It is advisable to avoid tea or coffee as these can cause further dehydration.

If possible take small regular meals but do not worry if you cannot tolerate food within the first three days. It is important not to force people undergoing detoxification to eat.

Environment

When you detoxify from alcohol your nervous system becomes over-excited. This may cause you to be oversensitive to light and noise, and make you feel anxious and irritable. It is important to try and keep your surroundings calm and quiet whenever possible.

When will I start to feel better?

Alcohol withdrawal symptoms are worst 24 to 48 hours after stopping alcohol. Usually you will feel a lot better within three to four days, providing you stick to your plan of care and treatment.

Dysphoria (sadness) and anxiety can also occur in the weeks after detoxification. Most of the time these symptoms go spontaneously.

Occasionally antidepressant treatment is necessary.

Contact numbers

We will visit you for the first three days of your detoxification and are available during office hours.

Community Team Nurse:

.....

Telephone no:.....

GP name:.....

Telephone no:.....

In case of emergency call your GP

