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[Detox](#) > [Alcohol detox](#)


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Alcohol withdrawal and detox

[Alcohol Addiction](#)
[Alcohol Detox](#)
[Alcohol Rehab](#)

Alcohol detox clears your system of addictive substances so that you can start treatment with a clear mind. Although it is not an easy process, it is a very important first step on the road to long-term recovery. Alcohol detox is best done under the guidance of medical professionals because you are likely to experience some level of withdrawal.

On this page, we will explain everything you need to know about alcohol detoxification, common alcohol withdrawal symptoms and how to detox safely.

TOPICS RELATED TO ALCOHOL DETOX

- > [Alcohol rehab](#)
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FAQ

- [What are the withdrawal effects of alcohol?](#)
- [Is alcohol detox dangerous?](#)
- [How do I remove alcohol from my system?](#)

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Immediate Admission	✓
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How does alcohol affect your mind and body?

If you drink excessively, your brain eventually creates a chemical imbalance, as it produces chemicals called neurotransmitters that act as stimulants to balance out alcohol's depressant effects. Therefore, significantly reducing or stopping alcohol consumption to detox can cause uncomfortable alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

Here is a breakdown of how these chemicals rebalance during alcohol detox:

- You suddenly stop drinking, so the levels of alcohol in your system begin to fall.
- Your brain takes a few days to realise that it no longer needs to balance out the alcohol.
- During this time, the brain continues to produce neurotransmitters, resulting in an overload of those chemical stimulants.
- This overload causes alcohol withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, confusion, tremors, fever and others.
- These withdrawal symptoms last until the alcohol detox process is complete (or you start drinking again).

Alcohol withdrawal symptoms

While alcohol detox symptoms are usually not life-threatening, if you have underlying health conditions or an extreme drinking history you may experience more serious withdrawal symptoms such as hallucinations, dangerously high blood pressure, severe tremors and seizures. These detox symptoms are called **delirium tremens (DTs)** and anyone suffering from them requires constant medical supervision and care. If you develop DTs these severe symptoms can continue for as long as a week and can cause serious health issues such as stroke, heart attack and even death.

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How to detox safely

If you decide to undergo alcohol detox, it is very likely that you will experience some level of alcohol withdrawal symptoms. These may be mild or severe depending on the extent of your alcohol dependency and your general health condition, but the important thing is that you seek guidance from a medical professional before you begin your detox. This will ensure you get all the help you need to complete the detox phase of your recovery process as safely as possible.

Home alcohol detoxification can be relatively safe for people who are not dependent on alcohol and want to stop drinking. For example, there are many people who decide to do *'Dry January'* or *'Sober October'*, and as long as you don't have a chronic drinking problem, detoxing at home can be a good option.

For anyone with a serious addiction, however, it is never advisable to attempt a home detox because the potential consequences can be so dangerous. The best option for alcoholics is always to go through detox at a professional alcohol detox centre. This will ensure you have all the medical guidance and assistance you need to complete detox in safety and comfort before moving on to comprehensive treatment.

Medication for alcohol detox

If your doctor or another healthcare professional believes you are at risk of developing severe symptoms during the withdrawal phase, or your condition begins to worsen after a few days, there are various **detox medications** that they may decide to administer.

Seizures can be particularly dangerous and so different benzodiazepines like alprazolam, diazepam and lorazepam are often given to reduce the risk. To calm your central nervous system and soothe your discomfort and agitation, you may also be given certain neuroleptic medications. If you have any mineral or nutrient deficiencies, which many people with alcohol use disorders have, you may also be given nutritional supplements to resolve the imbalances.

At UKAT, we offer medically assisted detox to all of our clients who are at risk of severe alcohol withdrawal symptoms. This involves the administration of the above medications as well as 24/7 supervision and support so that our medical experts can respond immediately to any problems.



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What to expect from alcohol detox

The reaction to alcohol detox varies from person to person but you will usually start to experience withdrawal symptoms around six hours after you had your last drink. They may begin as mild symptoms such as nausea, sweating and general malaise, but hopefully do not progress into anything more serious. Many people also experience factors such as:

- **Experiencing restlessness**
- **An increased blood pressure and heart rate**
- **Becoming increasingly irritable**

Generally speaking, withdrawal symptoms tend to worsen during the first couple of days and then reach their peak around the third or fourth day of detox. First, you will experience a chemical imbalance that results from your brain trying to balance out the depressant effects of alcohol by producing extra stimulants called neurotransmitters. This will last until your brain realises it no longer needs to keep producing compensatory chemicals to balance out non-existent alcohol.

You may find that you are constantly dehydrated during those first three days because alcohol acts as a diuretic, which is a chemical that causes frequent urination. To counter this, make sure you drink plenty of water, as this will help to make the detox process easier. You may also experience the same kind of discomfort that comes with a hangover, like headaches, nausea and restlessness, but staying hydrated will also help with these symptoms.



For most people, the three-day mark signals the start of better things to come. After three days, your hydration and blood sugar levels will have returned to normal and you should start to feel



As long as you don't go on to develop any serious complications, these withdrawal symptoms should totally subside around the seven-to-ten-day point. After this, your doctor may decide to prescribe you medication to help you with any ongoing cravings which can arise even after you have fully detoxed.

Even if your alcohol withdrawal symptoms are not severe, they will most likely be very unpleasant. This is why it is always better to complete detox at a professional alcohol detox clinic where the medical experts will ensure that you are as comfortable and safe as possible.



The positive side of alcohol detox

Essentially, the only way to rid your system of alcohol is to stop drinking and give your body the time it needs to recover. While it may seem like an insurmountable task at first, as long as you take it day by day and follow the advice of the medical professionals who are looking after you, it won't be long before you start to see real progress. ▲

Our bodies have incredible powers of recovery and after a month you should see some serious positive changes. The liver is the organ most affected by alcohol but after only one month, it will have lost around 20% of the fatty deposits caused by drinking. You should also see significant improvements in your energy, skin and cognitive clarity, and you will most likely be sleeping a whole lot better.

Our brains also take some serious damage from drinking, and it takes some time before that damage can be repaired. However, after about two weeks of undergoing alcohol detox, your brain will have replaced a large amount of the volume it lost due to alcohol. If you have been a heavy drinker for a long time, you may find that certain symptoms such as memory issues, and problems with attention span and reaction times still remain, at least in the short term. If you stay dedicated to sobriety and receive the right treatment, however, you can start to make real progress.

How to get help

If you or someone you know requires alcohol detoxification, it is important that you seek help as soon as possible. Different people react differently to detox, but almost everyone will experience some degree of withdrawal symptoms.



At UKAT, we provide alcohol detox for all of our clients in safe, comfortable settings. Our experienced healthcare specialists will be able to assess you to determine your overall health condition, the extent of your alcohol use disorder and whether you are likely to experience severe withdrawal. Once these assessments are complete, you will be guided through every step of the detox phase and will receive any medication you might need to make the process more comfortable.

It is important to note that while alcohol detox is a very important step in the recovery process, it will only rid your system of alcohol: it won't help to address the underlying causes of your [alcohol addiction](#). These can be many and varied, and so they require a **comprehensive [alcohol rehab](#) programme**.

Call us now for help

 0808 239 5541

Frequently Asked Questions

What are alcohol withdrawal symptoms?

Is alcohol detox dangerous?

How do I remove alcohol from my system?



Banbury Lodge

Verified patient

"Staff great, food great, treatment grea

Patient seen for:

Alcoholism



Overall experience	★ ★ ★
Cleanliness	★ ★ ★
Friendliness	★ ★ ★
Wait time	★ ★ ★

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About The Author



Nuno Albuquerque, BSc Hons SMM, Dip AC, Dip LC

Nuno Albuquerque is an Addictions Counsellor with over 18 years' experience working in the field of addiction in the UK and around the globe. Nuno comes to UKAT with a wealth of clinical and managerial experience, enhanced by continuous study and an interest in which techniques best support and sustain change in human beings.





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Addiction Treatment

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based on 1120 patient reviews

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Average Councelling

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