



## County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services

**Call: 03000 266666**

### Accessing the service

We offer a range of free, confidential and non-judgemental services for individuals and their families whose lives are affected by drugs and/or alcohol, and who live within County Durham.

Our aim is to support people to stay safe and live happier, healthy lives, free from drugs and alcohol.

[www.codurhamdrugalcoholrecovery.co.uk](http://www.codurhamdrugalcoholrecovery.co.uk)



**Basement Project**



# Alcohol detox

## A patient guide



# Alcohol Detox

Alcohol detoxification is a process which supports you to stop drinking completely.

Giving up alcohol reduces your risk of serious health complications (including heart disease, strokes and some types of cancer), and can help you to sleep better, feel more energised and even lose weight.

Going through alcohol detox is the first step in regaining control of your life. How you choose to detox is up to you but many people are able to detox safely at home over a number of days.

## Preparing for 'detox'

Often, the key to a successful detox lies in preparing well. Our team can help you with this. We'll answer any questions you might have, discuss medications with you (if necessary) and keep in contact when the detox begins. Before you begin detox, we will ask you:

- Questions about your health and your aims for detox
- Questions about your mental health and wellbeing
- Information about your last detox (if any) and its progress, including if you experienced any complications such as withdrawal symptoms
- Questions about previous detoxes and periods of abstinence

## Before Detox: Preliminary Tasks

- Complete a 'drinks diary' and bring this to all appointments. This can

help you understand your drinking patterns.

- Aim to gradually reduce your drinking and try to drink at set times.
- Do not drink alcohol past 10pm on the night before detox
- Remove any alcohol from your house the night before detox

## Support Preparations

It's very important that you have someone to support you for at least the first three days. So you will need to decide who will be your "support person".

Whether you choose a friend, partner or family member, this person must not drink alcohol around you during your detox and must provide round-the-clock support.

- Think about the kind of emotional and practical support you might need. How will this person help you, during and after the alcohol detox?
- Tell your worker about your support person, including name and contact details. If you're staying with a friend during detox, we will need their address too.

## Developing a new routine

When alcohol has been a large part of your daily life, it can be difficult to think of different ways to fill your time.

To help you plan, we have developed a timetable (see opposite). A typical alcohol detox lasts between five and seven days. The first days of the detox process will be the most difficult, so you might want to try gentle activities such as reading, watching TV, or walking.

	Morning	Afternoon
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

During this time, you may find yourself experiencing cravings or thinking about alcohol at several points during the day, so it's important to keep busy. These feelings will gradually become less intense and as the week progresses.

Some patients find that stopping drinking allows them to develop new hobbies or spend more time with friends and family.

## Crisis Plan

Sometimes, things do not go as well as expected during a detox, so you need to have a "crisis plan" to help you cope with any difficulties. Spectrum can help you with crisis planning.

**Remember, most people successfully complete detox with no problems.**

## Triggers

There will be times during and after your detox that you may experience cravings for alcohol. Often, these are "triggered" by a situation, feeling or environment.

However, by learning to recognise these triggers, you can plan to avoid them.

Think about:



- What is the normal place that you drink in and who with?
- Is it possible to avoid these places when others will be drinking?
- If you have had a detox before and relapsed, what would you do differently this time?

**Keeping in contact with our specialist staff is important for your recovery.**

## After Detox

### Lifestyle Changes

After you have completed your detoxification, it will be time to make changes to your lifestyle in order to maintain your achievement.

This often involves making some big changes, including who you spend time with and what you do with them.

- Think about how you spent your time before drinking – what hobbies/pastimes did you enjoy?
- Which of these could you do again to fill your time?
- What new activities would you like to do to fill your time?

