

Guide to Understanding Alcohol Detox

You Deserve Freedom From Addiction.

Learn what makes The Coleman Method a unique and more comfortable way to detox quickly.



The Path to Freedom Starts Here.

Facts About Alcohol Use Disorder

America's Overlooked Epidemic

American culture tells us that alcohol is used to celebrate, grieve, socialize, and relax. Many people use alcohol as a therapeutic tool; how often have you heard someone say "I need a drink" after a stressful event? There is a type of societal acceptance associated with this unhealthy relationship with alcohol. What people may not know is that alcohol is one of the most commonly abused drugs in the United States. More people are addicted to alcohol than to all illicit substances combined. Statistics show that approximately 1 in 12 adults suffer from alcohol dependence.

Although Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is prevalent, so is normal use in our culture. Many adults can consume a drink or two without developing AUD. A quick way to find the line between alcohol use and disorder is to remember the phrase: *alcohol is a problem when it causes problems*. When alcohol begins interfering in one's life, it may have progressed into addiction. This can include strained relationships with loved ones, spending more money on alcohol than you should, legal issues, or missing work due to a hangover.

One of the most important things to know about dealing with alcohol addiction is that it is a disease. Addiction is a chemical process in the brain. When a person with Alcohol Use Disorder stops drinking, there are physiological withdrawal symptoms because of that chemical dependence. In addition, persons suffering with AUD have increased risk of negative consequence of overall general health. Long-term alcohol use is capable of damaging nearly every organ and system in the body.

5 Staggering Facts about Alcohol Use in the US

- According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), an estimated 16 million people in the United States have Alcohol Use Disorder.
- An estimated 88,000 Americans die annually from alcohol-related causes, making alcohol the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States.
- In 2017, 26.4% of people ages 18 or older reported that they engaged in binge drinking in the past month.
- In 2015, 47% of the 78,529 liver disease deaths among individuals ages 12 and older involved alcohol.
- More than 10% of U.S. children live with a parent with alcohol problems according to a 2012 study.



Choosing a Detox Method that is Right for You

Common Alcohol Detox Options and How to Decide Which is Best For You.

Detoxing from Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) on your own can not only be scary and uncomfortable, but also much worse than that — it can be very dangerous and even fatal. The sustained use of alcohol changes the brain's chemistry in powerful ways, such that if withdrawal is not managed carefully there can be seizures, permanent brain damage, or even death. About half of all people who are dependent on alcohol will suffer from some withdrawal symptoms when they stop drinking. The extent and severity of alcohol withdrawal symptoms are related to the intensity of the dependence that a person has on it. This physical dependence can be influenced by many factors including age, the amount they are drinking, and other medical conditions the patient may have.

Choosing a Detox Method:

- **Self Detox:** It can be extremely uncomfortable and dangerous to stop drinking suddenly. We often hear about people who didn't think they were drinking a large amount, but after they stopped suddenly, they experienced alcohol withdrawal seizures. Some people will try to slowly wean the amount of alcohol they consume over a week or two, but most of the time they are not successful. Slowly weaning alcohol is usually so uncomfortable that most patients are unable to tolerate the withdrawal symptoms and the discomfort, and they return to their regular alcohol use. If patients stop drinking without any medical help, they may experience confusion, agitation, hallucinations, tremors, or even Delirium Tremens (DTs). Alcohol withdrawal can also include hyperthermia, cardiac arrhythmias, and complications related to co-occurring medical or mental health disorders. It is very important to seek competent medical care to avoid these problems.
- **Inpatient Detoxification:** Inpatient detox takes place in a hospital or a drug rehab facility. The detoxification usually takes 4 – 10 days. The number of days required will vary with each patient. Patients are given medicines such as benzodiazepines to provide some sedation and relief of withdrawal symptoms, and protection against seizures. Inpatient detoxification can be expensive and interrupts daily responsibilities. Sometimes health insurance companies may not cover the full length of stay that it requires to return to normal.
- **Outpatient Detoxification using The Coleman Method:** Our unique approach provides a comfortable and successful alternative so that the whole detoxification can be conducted on an outpatient basis. Patients tell us that they love being in their own home, and not in a sterile hospital environment. We use Phenobarbital and other medications to safely and comfortably detox patients, in as few as three days. Phenobarbital is a very effective detoxification medication because it targets the necessary parts of the brain and it has such a long duration that it successfully smooths out the transition to recovery. We see our alcohol patients daily and adjust the amount of medicines they receive so that they are comfortable and not overly sedated.

We recognize that completing a detox is just the first step towards recovery; the brain must fully recover physically, and there are significant behavioral and environmental changes that are necessary. After the detox is completed, we use long-acting Naltrexone to help patients reduce their cravings and begin their recovery.

Naltrexone is a non-addictive blocker that reduces cravings from alcohol. In most locations, it is available in both a one-month injection or a two-month implant. Naltrexone is highly effective in bridging the gap between detox and recovery. We recommend that our patients have 6-12 months of Naltrexone therapy following the detox, while they begin their recovery journey.

Alcohol Detox with The Coleman Method

The Comfortable, Fast Detox.

The Coleman Institute for Addiction Medicine is a leader in alcohol detox. Since 2004, Dr. Peter Coleman has been providing outpatient detox services for Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) using The Coleman Method, as a safe, convenient, and more comfortable method of detoxification. This method limits the risks of serious withdrawal symptoms and can be completed in as few as 3 days, so you can reclaim your life with little disruption.

How it Works and What to Expect

Before the Detox Begins: Patients have a telephone screening evaluation by a physician or nurse practitioner. The patient is usually advised to discontinue alcohol use at midnight before the day of their scheduled detoxification.

Day 1: This is the patient's longest day in the office. Patients arrive around 8:00 am and have a thorough history and physical examination. Blood work is drawn, an EKG is obtained, other labs are taken as necessary, and an intravenous line is started if needed. Vital signs are measured, a breathalyzer is recorded, and the level of withdrawal is assessed. Phenobarbital and other medicines are given according to the clinical need. Patients are monitored very closely throughout the day. The patient is typically in the clinic for 6-8 hours.

Intermediate Day(s): The Coleman Method alcohol detox process typically takes 3-4 days. After the first day, patients attend the clinic daily and continue oral Phenobarbital medications along with their other comfort medicines. Doses of medicines are reviewed daily and adjusted. Patients also meet with our case manager to develop a plan for long term recovery.

Final Day: By the final day of the detox, the patient's body is completely free of alcohol. We review and agree on a comprehensive treatment plan for long term recovery. We administer long-acting Naltrexone, and the patient can be discharged. Plans for follow up medical care are established.

Summary Information About Our Process

- Following the detox, many patients choose Naltrexone implants for additional support as they start a new life, free from addiction.
- **Vivitrol®**, a once-monthly injection of Naltrexone, is also widely available to assist in relapse prevention.
- Disulfiram supports the treatment of chronic alcoholism by producing an acute sensitivity to alcohol.

Benefits of the Coleman Alcohol Detoxification Program

Outpatient Care:

- Detox usually in only 3 days
- No inpatient hospital stay is required
- Detox in the comfort of your home

Less Discomfort

- Safe, assisted withdrawal process
- Customized medications to reduce discomfort
- Caring, compassionate medical professionals who specialize in addiction treatment

Recovery Support

- Naltrexone therapy to reduce cravings and prevent relapse
- Comprehensive treatment plan developed
- Access to ongoing recovery support services



**More Than 8,500
Patients Treated**

[VIEW PATIENT TESTIMONIALS](#)

Recovery Support

Continue Your Road to Long-Term Recovery.

According to the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** (SAMHSA), recovery is a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential. There are four major dimensions that support recovery:

Dimensions of Recovery Support

1

Health

Overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms and making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being.

2

Home

Having a stable and safe place to live.

3

Purpose

Conducting meaningful daily activities and having the independence, income, and resources to participate in society.

4

Community

Having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

Hope is the foundation of recovery. The belief that these challenges and conditions can be overcome is a core component of successful healing. Recovery is highly personal; you set your own path and your own pace. It is characterized by continual growth and improvement of health and wellness. Throughout your recovery journey, setbacks can be natural and can occur. Working through both anticipated and unforeseen setbacks is an exercise in resilience.

Relationships play a critical role in supporting your recovery. Family and friends often become the champions of their loved one's recovery journey. You may also experience adversities that lead to increased **family stress**, guilt, shame, anger, fear, anxiety, loss, grief, and isolation. Addressing adversity requires the resilience of both you and your family members. Your family can foster resilience by ensuring access to intentional peer support as a way of promoting your health and well-being. Having access to intentional peer support is crucial as it promotes engagement with treatment. Recovery support should be flexible and from a person-centered approach. Person-centered care furthers your recovery engagement by actively involving you in treatment decisions.

Support Services For Person-Centered Aftercare

The Right Support at the Right Time

We strongly believe that detoxification without appropriate follow up and treatment is almost always unsuccessful. Because of this we encourage all of our patients to find a treatment program that will best suit their needs and begin therapy with an appropriate substance abuse facility in their area as soon as possible following detoxification. Types of treatment modalities include:

- **Clinical Case Management:** Case managers provide support by putting you in contact with recommended health and human services. A clinical case manager can help develop a treatment plan and help you connect with resources to begin treatment. By staying involved, they can help you stay on the right track.
- **Individual Counseling:** Often called psychotherapy, or talk therapy, individual counseling is the process of working one-on-one with a trained mental health professional in a safe, confidential, and caring environment. It is highly encouraged to research your mental health professional to learn more about their specialty (i.e. do they have the experience related to your situation) and their practice philosophy (such as core beliefs of the practice) to ensure a good fit.
- **Substance Use Group Counseling:** Substance use group counseling is a process where a number of individuals with similar issues or concerns meet as a group with one or more therapists or facilitators to process and learn from one another's experiences. Substance use groups tend to have higher rates of success than other treatment methods. Groups reduce isolation, allow individuals to witness recovery in others, gain hope, and often can draw them into a culture of recovery.
- **Partial Hospital Program:** Partial Hospital Program (PHP) is an outpatient model of care that is time limited based on medical necessity of services. PHP would serve as an alternative to inpatient care or is the next step in care after an inpatient stay in lieu of continued hospitalization. These programs are available at least five days a week but also can offer half day, weekend, and evening hours.
- **Intensive Outpatient Program:** Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) is a series of sessions aligned to person-centered plans. This may include services provided during evenings and on weekends and/or interventions delivered by a variety of service providers in the community. The program may function as the next step following partial hospitalization, detoxification, or residential services. IOP may also be used to prevent or minimize the need for a more intensive and restrictive level of treatment and is considered to be more intensive and integrated than individual outpatient services.
- **Structured Outpatient Addiction Program:** Structured Outpatient Addiction Program (SOAP) is an outpatient program designed for the treatment of addiction and/or co-occurring mental health disorders. Similar to IOP, the program operates five days per week, including evening hours, and is determined by specific conditions. The average length of treatment is six to eight weeks.
- **Residential Treatment:** Residential treatment is treatment taking place in an inpatient unit. Generally, it is between 30 and 90 days. The length of time is determined by your individual symptoms. Treatment may or may not include medication-assistance or dual-diagnosis treatment for psychiatric illness.

- **Trauma-Informed Services:** Some patients may require a trauma-informed treatment approach, as trauma may impact their substance misuse. SAMHSA defines a trauma-informed treatment approach to mental health treatment as one that:
 - Understands the impact of trauma
 - Recognizes signs and symptoms of trauma in the patient as well as friends and family
 - Integrates knowledge of trauma into treatment systems and practices
 - Works to prevent re-traumatization in the individual

Models of trauma-specific interventions for substance use disorders generally use a multicomponent approach consisting of working collaboratively with patients, families, friends, and human services providers. These individuals come together to contribute to empower and educate about trauma and its effects, and train in coping and interpersonal skills.

- **Family Engagement and/or Therapy:** Substance misuse can not only affect you, but also your family members. Therapy can help you to address any family-related factors contributing to substance misuse, as well as help improve family relationships. Family therapy may involve educating the family about substance use disorders and their psychological, medical, and behavioral effects, or it may actively engage all family members in psychological therapy to address how family relationships may affect or be affected by substance misuse.
- **Medication Assisted Treatment:** Using Naltrexone, Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) combines behavioral therapy and medications to treat substance use disorders.
 - Naltrexone is a non-addictive opioid blocker that reduces cravings for opioids to help with long term recovery success as well as blocking the 'highs' from opioids.
 - Naltrexone Implant: The Naltrexone Implant is a small pellet that is inserted under your skin. The implant slowly releases the medication as it dissolves, typically lasting two months.
 - **Vivitrol®:** Vivitrol® is a branded monthly injection of Naltrexone.
- **Support Groups:** Community-based support groups include Alcoholics Anonymous, **Narcotics Anonymous** (NA), **SMART Recovery**, **Refuge Recovery** and others. These groups are typically peer-led and many incorporate a 12-step program that encourages regular participation in meetings.



Coleman Institute

FOR ADDICTION MEDICINE

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