



How to Detox from Opioids Safely

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Although it is possible to choose to detox on your own or “cold turkey” from opioids, unsupervised detox is not recommended and is possibly unsafe. Many who begin detox (from any substance) this way fail or relapse when the symptoms experienced during withdrawal become too intense and overwhelming to manage without help. Those who find the most significant levels of success in attaining lasting sobriety choose a **detox and comprehensive therapy program** to help them manage the difficult journey to detox from opioids.

What are Opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs responsible for producing various effects in the brain. They are believed to block pain signals from being received by the brain when sent from different areas in the body. Opioids can be prescription medications (generally known as painkillers) or street drugs such as heroin and fentanyl. In addition to blocking pain signals, opioids can also cause feelings of intense relaxation and a “high” that inhibits certain emotions. Unfortunately, users quickly develop a tolerance to and a physical dependence on opioids, making opioid drugs highly addictive and very dangerous.

The most commonly used (and abused) opioids are prescription medications such as OxyContin and Vicodin and the street drugs heroin and fentanyl. Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic drug between fifty and one hundred times more potent than morphine.

What are the Signs of Opioid Use?

One of the challenges associated with recognizing the signs of opioid use and misuse is that many of the common signs of opioid use are “desired” effects of prescription opioids. Some of the most commonly abused opioids are those provided by medical professionals to manage pain. If you or a loved one has a prescription for an opioid, it may be hard to distinguish the adverse signs and symptoms of use from those that are part of recommended use.

With some opioids, it is possible to experience addiction and overdose with just one use. However, in most cases, addiction to opioids develops after prolonged use and misuse. With time (even when using an opioid as directed), tolerance to the effects of the drug will develop, leading the user to take larger and more frequent doses to maintain the desired outcomes. These gradually increasing doses can lead to significant medical and mental health complications.

Recognizing the signs of opioid use can help you or a loved one get the help they need to overcome opioid addiction. The common signs include:

- Declining personal hygiene
- Changes in physical activity
- Cravings to use
- Insomnia
- Increase isolation or avoiding spending time with loved ones, family, or friends
- Stealing prescriptions from family members who have a prescription for an opioid
- New or worsening financial or legal problems
- Dietary changes and weight changes
- Issues with libido or sex drive
- Stealing items home or elsewhere to get money to buy drugs
- Doctor shopping
- Having stealing prescriptions
- Signs withdrawal symptoms when not using

What are the Symptoms of Opioid Withdrawal?

While it is possible to withdraw from substances with few withdrawal symptoms, detoxing from opioid drugs is different. When you begin to detox from opioids, whether prescription or otherwise, unpleasant and painful symptoms usually occur. Opioid medications are also one of a few classes of drugs with a higher risk of dangerous and potentially fatal withdrawal symptoms in some instances. If you are ready to overcome opioid addiction, it is best to do so in a structured, safe detox program under medical supervision.

Unfortunately, detox and its accompanying withdrawal symptoms are a required part of overcoming opioid addiction. The severity and duration of withdrawal will vary based on the opioid you used and factors unique to your pattern of use. In some cases, the first withdrawal symptoms will occur in as few as six hours after your last dose and last for up to two weeks. Specific withdrawal symptoms can also vary from substance to substance, but anxiety, body aches, agitation, difficulties sleeping, vomiting, sweating, and nausea are common in most cases. As mentioned above, opioids can lead to dangerous withdrawal symptoms, including irregular breathing, irregular heart rate, seizures, hallucinations, coma, and death.

There is no test or series of evaluations that help predict who will experience severe opioid withdrawal. These potentially dangerous symptoms can occur at any time and to anyone. Therefore, it is vital to seek help at a rehab where trained medical and mental health professionals can help you navigate the challenging symptoms that often occur during withdrawal.

How to Detox From Opioid Safely

Safely detoxing from opioids involves seeking help from treatment professionals at a medically **supervised detox program** like Grand Falls Recovery. During detox, a team of skilled medical providers will provide high levels of support and monitoring as you focus on healing from addiction. If needed, they can help ease some of the more unpleasant detox symptoms through specific medications. Detox is often a complex process, but it is the first essential step on the journey to sobriety. Let the team at Grand Falls Recovery help you begin your sobriety journey safely. **Contact us today** for more information about our programs and how we can help you.

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