

What is the Timeline for Alcohol Detox?

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Each year millions of Americans (teens and adults alike) seek help at an addiction treatment program like Grand Falls Recovery to stop drinking safely. Although the end goal for all is the same, achieving lasting sobriety, how each person achieves and maintains their goals varies. It is essential to remember that addiction and the journey to recovery are unique to the individual, the nature of their addiction, and their history with addiction treatment. Recovering from alcohol addiction is often not a one-step process.

Is Alcohol Addictive?

Yes, alcohol is addictive. When you drink, the chemicals in alcohol cause changes to how your brain and body function. In the majority of cases, these changes are enjoyable and desirable. Alcohol leads to reduced inhibitions, relaxation, and happiness because alcohol changes how your body produces dopamine. Dopamine is a chemical in your body responsible for feelings of happiness and joy.

When dopamine is released, it acts like your body's natural pain killer. Because alcohol consumption produces these effects on the body, it makes you want to drink more frequently and more often to ensure pleasurable feelings do not go away. Inevitably, people who develop an addiction to alcohol will continue to drink regardless of the known harms in negative consequences alcohol addiction may cause.

Can Alcohol Cause Withdrawal Symptoms?

When you drink alcohol regularly for a long time or drink excessively frequently, it can lead to a dependency on the effects of alcohol. When you depend on the feelings alcohol produces in the brain and body, it will lead to withdrawal symptoms when you reduce how much you drink or try to stop drinking. Symptoms of alcohol withdrawal can range from relatively mild to life-threatening. The severity of these symptoms will vary based on the individual and factors such as how much you drink and how long you engaged in problem drinking.

What are the Symptoms of Alcohol Withdrawal?

Everyone who enters treatment for addiction will have a different experience; however, some symptoms are shared across most cases. These include mild symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, anxiety, irritability, and sweating. Other symptoms people may experience to varying severity include heart palpitations, elevated blood pressure, nausea and vomiting, and shaking and tremors.

The shaking and tremors experienced by someone undergoing detox are often known as **delirium tremens** or DTs. Delirium tremens are often present in individuals suffering from extreme alcohol withdrawal. Unfortunately, DTs can result in seizures, making them one of the more life-threatening withdrawal symptoms. Statistics show that approximately one out of every twenty people who experience alcohol withdrawal will also experience DTs.

Symptoms of delirium tremens usually begin within two to three days after an individual stops drinking and may include shaking, trembling, fatigue, hallucinations, fever, intense confusion, seizures, and other intense and potentially life-threatening symptoms.

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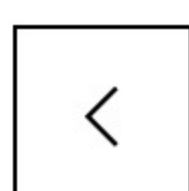
Most symptoms of alcohol withdrawal are present within six hours after the person has their last drink. Symptoms will often present as mild and intensify after two or three days. The withdrawal cycle typically lasts for about one week.

During the first twelve hours of the detox process, a person may start sweating. They may also become increasingly irritable and experience nausea and vomiting. As their body works to flush alcohol from their system, they may also experience elevated blood pressure and accelerated heart rate. Other symptoms experienced during the first twelve hours consist of withdrawal-induced insomnia and tremors.

After twenty-four to forty-eight hours, withdrawal-related symptoms will worsen and intensify. Those who experience severe withdrawal due to chronic, heavy drinking, intense, and potentially life-threatening symptoms may develop.

During the third through fifth days of detox, emotional distress and delirium tremens may continue. After the fifth day, many of the physical withdrawal symptoms begin to subside; however, the psychological and emotional symptoms often persist for some time. Some individuals will experience difficulties sleeping, anxiety, and irritability for weeks or months after completing detox and treatment.

It is important to remember that while the above timeline holds mostly true, in most cases, the steps and stages of achieving sobriety will be different for you than they may be for someone else. It takes the body and the mind time to overcome the effects of long-term alcohol use. For some, depending on the severity of their addiction, the time it takes to cleanse their system and move forward from detox symptom-free and focused on healing may be a matter of days. Still, it may take a week or more for others before the most complex symptoms of detox resolve. Because the journey to **recovery from alcohol addiction** can be difficult and, in some cases, dangerous, it is crucial to begin your sobriety journey in a safe and supportive environment like Grand Falls Recovery. Our team of professional and caring treatment providers is here to help ensure you have the support and guidance you need throughout all stages of alcohol addiction recovery. To learn more about our **Missouri addiction treatment programs** and how we can help you detox from alcohol, **contact** a member of our admissions team today.



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