

Getting Help: Psychoactive Substances



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When to get immediate help

Go to the nearest hospital emergency department (call 111 if you can't get someone to hospital) if a person shows any of the following symptoms after using a psychoactive substance:

difficulty breathing	chest pain
feeling cut off from the world	racing heart rate
difficult to rouse or wake	lowered consciousness
shaking and twitching	rapid eyeball movement
nonstop vomiting	extreme anxiety and panic
paranoia	loss of contact with reality
fainting or loss of speech and eyesight	seizures

What you can expect if you stop using

If you have been using psychoactive substances regularly and you stop, you are likely to experience withdrawal (also known as detox). Withdrawal can cause symptoms that could last for several weeks or even months. Most people can cope with mild withdrawal by knowing what to expect, taking extra care of themselves (such as resting and drinking water) and possibly using natural remedies to help with sleep and agitation. Most people will complete withdrawal with mild to moderate symptoms.

Common symptoms

Restlessness	Irritability	Agitation
Sleep problems	Low mood	Heavy sweating
Anxiety	Headaches	Low energy
Poor concentration	Mood swings	Vomiting
Diarrhoea	Aches and pains	Nausea
Low appetite	Craving drugs	

More extreme symptoms

Depression	Hallucinations
Paranoia	Racing heart
Suicidal thoughts	Anger
Ongoing diarrhea and vomiting	
Aggression and violence	
Confusion and memory problems	

Concerns about withdrawal symptoms

If you have concerns about withdrawal symptoms contact your doctor or local hospital.

If you think a person experiencing withdrawal is having suicidal thoughts or they have a history of feeling suicidal or low mood, ring the mental health crisis service at your local hospital.

Calling Healthline

0800 611 116

If you are experiencing withdrawal and feel worried, unsafe or vulnerable, or you have concerns about someone else experiencing withdrawal, call the free, 24-hour Healthline to speak to a registered nurse. The Healthline nurse will recommend the best care and tell you where you can go to seek help.

Managing your own withdrawal

For more information go to:

www.matuaraki.org.nz/library/matuaraki/managing-your-own-withdrawal-a-guide-for-people-trying-to-stop-using-drugs-and-or-alcohol

Getting help to stop using

Contact the Alcohol and Drug Helpline:
0800 787 797

The Alcohol and Drug Association offers alcohol and drug information:
www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz

To find the nearest alcohol and drug service in your region go to:
www.addictionshelp.org.nz/Services/Home
For more information about psychoactive substances and getting help go to
www.health.govt.nz/pshelp