

How to Help an Alcoholic With Withdrawal Symptoms

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If you have a friend or loved one who is suffering from alcoholism, you both have a long road ahead. Once the drinking stops, the recovering alcoholic will suffer physical, psychological and emotional withdrawal symptoms. The good news is that there is plenty of help available for both the addicted individual and his [family](#).

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

Instructions

things you'll need:

- Multi-vitamins Mineral supplements Bottled water Copy of the A.A. "Big Book"

Dealing With the Physical Withdrawals from Alcohol

- 1 Throw away all forms of alcohol from the alcoholic's home or apartment. This includes [cooking](#) sherry, cough syrup, mouthwash and any other products containing alcohol.
- 2 Clean out the refrigerator and discard fast [foods](#), caffeinated beverages and other "convenience" items. The recovering alcoholic will need fresh fruits, vegetables and fruit juices to replace important nutrients that have been leeches from his body.
- 3 Ensure that the recovering alcoholic takes a high quality multi-vitamin and mineral supplement. Depending solely on the vitamins contained in food will not be enough.
- 4 Have the recovering alcoholic drink at least eight glasses of water a day--more if he can tolerate it. Alcohol is a potent diuretic which often leads to serious dehydration problems.
- 5 Prepare three home cooked meals a day for the recovering alcoholic. Avoid eating out for the first 30 days of recovery, especially in restaurants or bars where alcohol is served.
- 6 Call a physician if the recovering alcoholic experiences radical mood swings, delirium tremors (DTs), prolonged sweating, sleep difficulties, nausea or vomiting, seizures, increased heart rate, high blood pressure, hallucinations, memory loss, confusion or fever. These may need to be controlled by prescription medications, an in-patient treatment program or both.

Psychological and Emotional Support During Recovery

- 1 Help the recovering alcoholic into a daily routine that includes getting out of bed in the morning, eating at prescribed times, exercising and going to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. Structure is very important to early recovery.
- 2 Follow your loved one's doctor's instructions for taking prescribed medications. These include anti-depressants, anti-convulsants, high blood pressure medications and tranquilizers. If IV-administered fluids are prescribed, work with a licensed healthcare professional to ensure that the alcoholic's health is stabilized.

- 3 Compile a list of daily Alcoholics Anonymous meetings near the recovering alcoholic's home. Associating with other recovering alcoholics and following a 12-step program will be instrumental in success.
- 4 Support your loved one in renewing his spiritual faith. Most successful recovering alcoholics depend on the support of a "higher power" in the form of organized religion, daily meditation or some other form of spiritual guidance. Twelve-step programs can assist with this important aspect of recovery.

Tips & Warnings

- Support the recovering alcoholic by not drinking or smoking around him. Attend A.A. meetings with him. Treat the alcoholic's withdrawal as recovery from a disease. Ensure that the recovering alcoholic gets plenty of fresh air, exercise, sleep and good food.
- Do not allow the recovering alcoholic to buy into his situation as a "terminal disease." Never try to treat the alcoholic at home if he belongs in a medical facility. Stay away from "miracle treatments" advertised on television or in magazines.

Resources

- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#)