UNITY PATH
- FAMILY SUPPORT -

You are not alone.
Help and healing are possible.

UNDERSTANDING DETOX

A Safe First Step Toward Recovery

Thinking about detox can feel overwhelming—but you don't have to face it alone. Whether you're considering recovery yourself or supporting someone you love, understanding what detox is can help reduce fear and uncertainty.

Hope begins with one step.

You don't have to make this decision today.
This guide is here to help you understand your options.

WHAT IS DETOX?

Detox (detoxification) is the process of safely managing withdrawal when someone stops or reduces alcohol or other drugs.

- Depending on the substance and the person's health, medical supervision may be the safest option.

For some substances, withdrawal can be uncomfortable. For others, it can become serious or even life-threatening without medical care.

Detox is often the first step in recovery—not recovery itself. It helps prepare a person for the next stage, such as counselling, treatment, peer support, or ongoing recovery.

Detox is the beginning, not the end.

WHY IS DETOX IMPORTANT?

- Helps manage withdrawal symptoms safely
- Reduces risk of serious medical complications
- Provides medical care and emotional support
- Creates a safer foundation for ongoing recovery
- Connects people with treatment, peer support, and community resources

IF YOU'RE FEELING AFRAID

Will withdrawal hurt?
Medical care can help make it as safe and comfortable as possible.

Will I be judged?
Asking for help takes courage. You are not alone.

Do I have to do this alone?
No. Support is available every step of the way.

What happens after detox?
Detox is the beginning. Many options and supports are available.

What if I don't know where to start?
Reaching out is the first step. Help is closer than you think.



Many people feel scared before detox.
You're not alone, and asking for help is a courageous first step.

Detox is the beginning of recovery—not the end.
Every journey starts with one step.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING DETOX

Knowing what to expect can make taking the first step a little less overwhelming.

One step today can lead to a better tomorrow. ♡

TYPICAL DETOX TIMEFRAMES

(These are general estimates. Every person is different.)

SUBSTANCE	TYPICAL TIME
Alcohol	3 – 7 days
Opioids	5 – 10 days
Cocaine	Several days to 1 – 2 weeks
Methamphetamine	Several days to 2 weeks
Benzodiazepines	May take weeks or longer and should only be reduced under medical supervision

WHAT HAPPENS DURING DETOX?

You may receive:

- A medical assessment
- Monitoring by healthcare professionals
- Medication to help manage withdrawal symptoms (when appropriate)
- Nutritious meals and hydration
- Time to rest in a safe environment
- Emotional support
- Help planning your next steps
- 24/7 support and care

♡ *Every person's experience is different.*

A healthcare provider or withdrawal management service can recommend the safest option for you.

FOR FAMILIES & LOVED ONES



If someone you love is considering detox:

- Detox is not something they should go through alone. Depending on the substance, withdrawal can require medical supervision to be done safely.
- Encourage them to speak with a doctor or addiction professional about the safest option.
- Offer support without trying to force change.
- Continue taking care of your own physical and emotional well-being.
- Remember that recovery is a journey, and families need support too.

You didn't cause the addiction, you can't control it, and you can't cure it—but you can be part of a supportive recovery journey.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DETOX?

Detox is only the first step.
Recovery may continue with:

- Peer support
- Counselling
- Residential or outpatient treatment
- Recovery meetings
- Mental health care
- Healthy routines & community support

Recovery looks different for everyone.

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

If you're thinking about detox or recovery, consider reaching out to:

- Your family doctor or healthcare provider
- A local mental health or addiction service
- A withdrawal management or detox program
- A trusted peer support group
- Someone you trust
- You don't have to have all the answers today. You only have to take one step.

PEER SUPPORT NOTICE: This resource is for peer support and educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

If you or someone you love is experiencing a medical or mental health emergency, call your local emergency services or go to the nearest emergency department immediately.

UNITY PATH
- FAMILY SUPPORT -

DETOX IS MORE THAN WITHDRAWAL



Many withdrawal management and detox programs *can* help connect people with additional services before they leave. The services available vary by program and location.

MANY PROGRAMS MAY HELP WITH:

Residential or outpatient treatment referrals
Connecting you to ongoing treatment options.

Counselling or recovery planning
Support to help you create a plan for your next steps.

Peer support services
Connecting you with people who understand.

Mental health referrals
Linking you to mental health services and supports.

Family education and support
Information and support for families and loved ones.

Housing or shelter referrals
Helping connect you with safe housing options.

Income or financial assistance applications (where available)
Support with applications for financial assistance and benefits.

Transportation planning
Help with getting to appointments and programs.

Community resource referrals
Connecting you to local services and ongoing community supports.

Some detox programs also have case managers, social workers, or discharge planners who can help connect you to these services.

Every detox program is different.
Ask what supports and referrals are available before you leave.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

- Health card or identification
- Current medications (if instructed)
- Comfortable clothing
- Toiletries
- Phone numbers for loved ones
- A notebook or journal
- Items permitted by the facility (check ahead)

Less is best. Check with the facility ahead of time about what is allowed.

BEFORE YOU GO

Every detox program has its own admission process.

It's a good idea to ask:

- Do I need a referral?
- What should I bring?
- Can someone drive me?
- What happens after detox?
- How long will I stay?



Detox isn't the finish line.
It's the beginning of recovery.

You don't have to have everything figured out before asking for help.

One conversation could change your life.

You are not alone.
HOPE. HEALING. SUPPORT.
Together we can create a path forward.