

Withdrawal from Cocaine

You may experience SOME of the listed symptoms of withdrawal. Remember that ALL THESE SYMPTOMS ARE TEMPORARY. If any persist or worsen, have them checked by your doctor in case they are related to another problem.

See an explanation of some of the symptoms on page 2.

ACUTE WITHDRAWAL (First Stage)

The symptoms appear within 12 hours after your last use of cocaine and last four to seven days.

Physical Symptoms

- excessive sleepiness
- excessive appetite
- tiredness, low energy
- abdominal pain
- chills, tremors
- restlessness
- aching muscles

Psychological Symptoms

- severe depression
- irritability
- mood swings
- vivid or unpleasant dreams
- drug hunger

POST ACUTE WITHDRAWAL (Second Stage)

The symptoms gradually decrease after six weeks. They can last for several months.

Symptoms

- depression
- difficulty experiencing pleasure (anhedonia)
- sleep difficulty (too much or too little)
- vivid or unpleasant dreams
- drug hunger
- anxiety
- low energy

DESCRIPTION OF SYMPTOMS (alphabetical order)

Anhedonia: difficulty experiencing pleasure with the continued use of cocaine. After you stop using the cocaine, the brain gradually recovers so that you can experience pleasure normally. The ability to experience pleasure returns gradually, taking longer when there has been heavy use for a long time (can take up to one to two years to fully experience pleasure with very heavy use).

Anxiety: feeling that an unreal or imagined danger is about to happen, feelings of powerlessness accompanied by increased heart rate, increased breathing, sweating, trembling, weakness. Both excess caffeine and excess sugar can increase anxiety.

Drug hunger: an involuntary craving for cocaine that can be accompanied by images such as seeing imaginary persons and objects or feeling imaginary sensations as if they are real. The drug hunger is often accompanied by strong images or dreams of using cocaine. It can be triggered by many things such as: something in your surroundings that reminds you of using; mood swings; or a sudden increase in body temperature. The drug hunger occurs intermittently (more often at first) for a few years.