

Getting Sober: Learning to Live Without Drugs (Opiates) and Alcohol - Patients

You have been admitted to the hospital for opiate (o-pe-it) detoxification (de-tock-si-fa-ka-shun). This treatment, commonly called “detox”, is to help free an addict from his or her drug habit.

What to Expect in the Hospital

The following things may happen to you as the drugs leave your body:

- Change in pulse rate
- Diarrhea
- Changes in size of pupils of the eyes
- Yawning
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea
- Restlessness
- Anxiety or irritability
- Runny nose or eye tearing
- Sweating
- Shaking
- Pain
- “Goosebumps”

Detox is a very uncomfortable process. Even though detox is not easy, it is one of the best treatment decisions you can make. It may even save your life.

For your safety, you will stay in your room for as long as the detox lasts. You may have certain visitors, but you may not leave the floor. You can get up and walk around your room. While you are here, your belongings will be kept safe by the staff. You will get them back when you leave.

Here are some other things that you may experience in detox:

- A warm safe bed and time to rest and sleep
- Healthy food
- People who want you to get better
- Access to television, video games, books, massages and recreational activities
- Examinations by doctors, nurses, dentists, social workers and other professionals on the healthcare team (Picture 1).



Picture 1 A healthcare professional and patient.

What to Expect after Going Home

With intensive outpatient treatment or rehabilitation (rehab)

You will have medicine to take at home after your detox. This medicine is called Suboxone[®] (buprenorphine/naloxone). Your doctor's instructions on how to take this medicine must be followed exactly. You must also keep your appointments with Dr. _____.

You CANNOT get a refill on your prescription without Dr. _____ seeing you. It is VERY important to keep your medicine out of the reach and sight of other children. Your Suboxone[®] is safe for you, but is very dangerous to other children. Call Poison Control immediately at 1-800-222-1222 if you think someone else has gotten into your medicine.

If you feel like you want to hurt or kill yourself, talk to your parents or a safe adult, or call the hospital right away, (614)722-2000. You can also call a Suicide Prevention Hotline at (614)294-3300 (teen line) or (614)221-5445, or toll free 1-800-273-8255.

These are some things you need to do to succeed in staying clean and sober:

- Attend daily 12-step meetings; Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA) or another approved support group. DAILY ATTENDANCE IS KEY! 30 days, 30 meetings. Talk to your social worker about support programs in your neighborhood.
- Residential rehab placement for at least a month
- Intensive outpatient program: counseling, drug testing, group meetings for several hours a day, several days a week
- Lifelong avoidance of addictive substances
- Lifetime attention to avoiding triggers of use (using friends and family, emotional issues).

Your addiction to drugs has taken over your life. In order to become and stay sober and clean, you have to make a choice not to use. This will take a strong commitment to yourself, support from those people who are close to you, help from your doctor, therapist and support group. You have to choose every day not to use. Some days will be easier than others and some days will be very difficult, but you can do this. Find support, stick to your treatment plan and take care of yourself.