



Top 6 Methods for Detoxing from Opioids

If you or someone you love is addicted to opioids and needing info on how to quit, this article can help. The first step in quitting opioids is knowing what kind of battle you're up against. For this reason, I will provide you with a basic understanding of how opioids work in the body. Furthermore, I'm also going to explain how dependence develops, and why a severe withdrawal syndrome results from stopping the use of opioids.

Step two on your journey overcoming opioid addiction is learning about the available detox treatment options. There are many to choose from, and each method has pros and cons associated with it. I will list the main features of the Top 6 opioid detox methods, as well as some of their most common pros and cons. After reading this "menu" of detox protocols, you should have a good idea which ones will fit your individual needs, preferences, and financial capability.

Opioids Mechanism of Action

Despite all the associated negative aspects (addiction, overdose, crime, etc.), prescription opioids still have a positive intent. They are commonly prescribed in the treatment of moderate to severe pain.



These drugs, along with heroin, attach to specific proteins called opioid receptors, which are located on nerve cells in the brain, spinal cord, GI tract, and other organs.

Once these drugs attach to the opioid receptors, their effects come on, which include, but are not limited to:

- Pain relief
- Euphoria
- Sedation
- Constipation
- Nausea

As human beings, we already have an endogenous painkilling system that is capable of producing pain relief, sedation, and euphoria. This natural pain relief system is activated when we exercise, eat certain foods, or perform other activities.

For example, imagine a man who has just run five miles along the beach. As a result of this intense physical exertion, his body naturally produces its own opioid chemicals, known as endorphins and enkephalins, thus reducing pain, and promoting euphoria naturally (“runners high”).



Opioid Abuse Leads to Brain Adaptations

So you see, we already produce these natural opioid chemicals in the precise amounts our bodies were designed to handle. The problem arises when an individual has been using an opioid drug for a period of time. After prolonged use of opioid drugs, the production of endogenous opioids is inhibited, which accounts in part for the withdrawal syndrome that results from the immediate cessation of the drug.

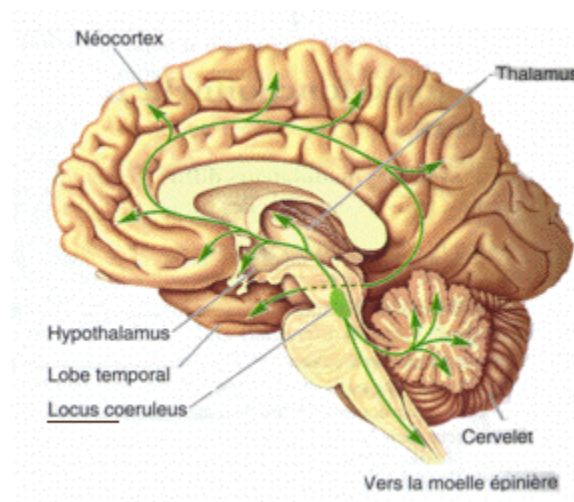
The continuous use of opioid overrides our natural ability to produce endorphins and enkephalins. The brain comes to rely upon the drugs to create these neurotransmitters. When a person stops using the opioid drug, the brain doesn't start creating these endogenous opioids right away. It short-circuits, leading to withdrawal symptoms, and deteriorating psychological function.

Whether an individual is abusing opioids or even taking them as prescribed by a physician, the continued use quickly leads to tolerance. Tolerance is a state of adaptation in which exposure to a drug induces changes that result in a decrease of the drug's effects over time.

If an individual continues using opioids after a tolerance has been established, they will eventually develop a physiological dependence. Dependence develops when the neurons adapt to the repeated drug exposure and only function normally in the presence of the drug.

The Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome

When a dependent individual abruptly stops taking opioids (leading opioid-blood concentration to fall below the required level), the now opioid-tolerant central nervous system (CNS) goes haywire. With no inhibitive stimulation to satisfy receptors, the pathways of the CNS fire signals strenuously, performing at a level much higher than pre-dependence levels. Now the locus coeruleus responds by triggering the autonomic fight or flight response.



What results is known as the opioid withdrawal syndrome, and it's one of the most horrific experiences an individual could even go through.

Some of the most common symptoms of opioid withdrawal include:

- Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Diarrhea
- Achy muscles and limbs
- Teary eyes
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Gastrointestinal distress
- Irritability
- Hot and cold sweats and chills
- Goose bumps
- Vomiting
- Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS)

Choosing the Right Detox Method

There are so many ways to detox off opioids the information is enough to make your head spin. To help you choose the best detox method for you own unique needs, I've created a comprehensive list of the Top 6 treatment options.

After reviewing this list, as well as the features, cost, pros and cons of each, you'll be well-equipped to decide which ones resonate with you the most. Once you have this list narrowed down to one or two options, you can research them further and perhaps talk to a professional about these options.



1. Medical Detoxification

- Different facilities offer varying treatment protocols, including medications used, length of treatment, and other factors.
- Most detox facilities will treat your opioid withdrawal symptoms with medications.
- You're overseen by doctors, and often times patients will spend a few days in detox, then transfer to inpatient rehab (this is common but not always the case).
- Allows the patient to be closely monitored throughout the process and given appropriate medication to prevent severe withdrawal symptoms.
- Typically costs thousands of dollars, though many insurance plans cover the cost, or at least a portion of it.
- Only treats the acute withdrawal symptoms, and does nothing to combat Post Acute Withdrawal Syndrome (PAWS).

2. Rapid Detoxification

- Opioid Withdrawal occurs while patients are asleep under general anesthesia.
- Patient is given IV injections of medications called opioid blockers such as naltrexone, naloxone, and nalmepine, and physical detoxification is achieved within 4 to 8 hours.
- Patient is also given IV injections of muscle relaxants, anti-nausea medications, and other drugs to relieve symptoms.
- Rapid detox takes place in an intensive care unit of a hospital, and the patients are typically discharged within 48 hours following recovery from anesthesia and assessment of their physical status.
- Can cost many thousands of dollars, and insurance may or may not cover this option.
- Only treats the acute symptoms, and does nothing to combat PAWS.

3. Ultra Rapid Opiate Detoxification

- Patients are placed under general anesthesia (medically-induced coma) and doctors administer the opioid blocker naltrexone, which blocks all of their endorphin receptors.
- The withdrawal is an accelerated process, pushing them into 100% detoxification within a 5-30 minute period.
- Insurance companies don't pay for this type of treatment, and it is very expensive out of pocket (sometimes over \$20,000).
- Only treats the acute symptoms and doesn't help with PAWS.
- This method can be very hard on the body for some individuals.
- Quickest way to eliminate opioid dependence.

4. Outpatient Detoxification

- Typically safe and effective for individuals who are more likely to have mild to moderate withdrawal symptoms, rather than severe symptoms.

- Can be accomplished with a variety of medications such as buprenorphine-naloxone, buprenorphine alone, clonidine alone or clonidine combined with naltrexone.
- Some methadone clinics have a 21-Day Detox Program to choose for individuals wanting to quit opioid and not stay on methadone long-term.
- Patients get to live at home and visit the Outpatient facility at varied intervals depending on the program.
- Typically costs a couple of hundred dollars to \$1,000 or more depending on the medications prescribed and the treatment program.
- The least intrusive detox method to an individual's life.
- Only treats acute symptoms, and does nothing for PAWS.

5. Home Detox

Often times an opioid-dependent individual will not have the resources to enroll in the above mentioned detox programs. Thus, it becomes necessary to detox from opioids at home. There are a plethora of medications for opioid withdrawal, as well as natural methods for opioid withdrawal a person can use to minimize symptoms.

For those who have a sympathetic doctor, it may be very beneficial to have them prescribe you medications that have been shown in studies to reduce opioid withdrawal symptoms. If you are not able to get prescription medications, don't worry.

Many people have reduced symptoms from home using over-the-counter medications and natural supplements found at local drug, vitamin, and health food stores.



Home detox is the least expensive method of opioid treatment, however, many people don't feel comfortable doing this because they don't have a doctor overseeing them. However, with the first 4 detox protocols in this article, none of them treat PAWS. With home detox, an individual can use things like exercise, nutrition, supplementation, breathing exercises, meditation, yoga, adequate water intake, healthy sleeping schedules, and many other strategies for decreasing the post-acute withdrawal symptoms.

These post-acute symptoms can last weeks to months or even longer, and I have found them to be very detrimental to recovery. Thus, it becomes important to use a holistic Bio/Psycho/Social PAWS Treatment Plan to eliminate these lingering symptoms.

Additionally, one could always choose one of the other detox methods for the acute withdrawal, then do their own home-based protocol to treat PAWS.

[Click here now to view my best Home Detox Program.](#)

6. Ibogaine Treatment

Ibogaine is a naturally-occurring psychoactive substance found in *Tabernanthe iboga*, a root that grows in Africa. It is commonly used by the Bwiti people for medicinal and spiritual practices. In the 1960's it started to gain popularity as having anti-addictive properties.



Although it has been used to treat addiction to alcohol, nicotine, methamphetamines, crack and other drugs, it's most well-known for treating opioid addiction. This powerful hallucinogen can stop even the most severe opioid withdrawal symptoms.

What's more, in the majority of cases it not only stops withdrawal, but it also eliminates or significantly reduces opioid cravings for several months after treatment.

How is ibogaine able to do this? It is theorized that ibogaine binds to a myriad of receptor sites, including the opioid receptors. Ibogaine supposedly resets your biochemistry, restoring your brain to its pre-opioid addiction functioning.



Ibogaine has been referred to as an “addiction interruptor.” This means that if you really work on improving your life during the months that follow treatment, there is a high chance you can stay clean long-term. If you squander your time hanging out with old friends and engaging in the same thoughts, decision and behaviors, you will likely return to active addiction.

Ibogaine is currently a Schedule 1 drug in the US, meaning the FDA believes it to have no medicinal value and a high potential for abuse.

Ibogaine treatment centers operate legally in the following countries:

- Canada
- Mexico
- The Caribbean
- Central America
- South America
- Many countries in Europe

Conclusion

Opioid addiction is at an all-time high, and the numbers are increasing exponentially. Due to the severe withdrawal syndrome that ensues after an opioid-dependent individual abruptly stops using the drug, many people that want desperately to quit are afraid of getting clean.

The Top 6 opioid detox methods listed in this article have helped countless individuals get through the acute withdrawal, and some of these methods also help to counteract post-acute withdrawal symptoms. I sincerely hope you gained insight into which of these methods could work for you and your budget, and I wish you the best on your journey in life. Take care of yourself, and good luck!