



Other Resources

Narcotics Anonymous 12 Step Program: www.na.org

A very good resource: Search "cocaine":
www.emedicinehealth.com

Cocaine Anonymous
www.ca.org

Anonymous Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator:
<http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>

>IN
FOCUS
RECOVERY

COCAINE

cessation

Coming in from the Snow

Recovery from Cocaine Abuse or Addiction

If you are reading this brochure then you or someone you know probably believes that you are suffering from cocaine abuse. Cocaine is a very powerful drug with a high potential for abuse. It's one of the most habit forming illicit drugs. *It's not glamorous and it's not good for you.* For every rush there is a drop, and every minute spent on top will be met with two on bottom.

Complicating the lure of cocaine is its low social stigma. The perception of cocaine's effects dovetail with American values of industriousness and drive: It's an upper that 'helps you work more'. It's the drug of choice of fashionable glitterati, executives, millionaires and celebrities. But even they end up dead or in rehab. Don't be fooled by the abuser's façade: cocaine is by no means harmless.

Detecting Cocaine Dependency

Cocaine addiction can also be called cocaine **dependency**. This is because the sufferer's body and mind are reliant upon cocaine. Here are some questions that might help to clarify if one is cocaine dependent.

- Have I given up things that I enjoyed in order to use cocaine?
- Have I chosen cocaine over a friend or loved one?
- Does cocaine interfere with my work or finances?
- Do I find it difficult to turn down an offer of cocaine?
- Do I need cocaine to have a good or even acceptable day?
- Do I get angry or depressed when I am denied cocaine?
- Do I constantly seek, use or think about cocaine?
- Do I suffer from paranoia, depression, an intense craving for more cocaine, exhaustion, anxiety, mood swings, irritability, fatigue, depression or insomnia when I stop using cocaine suddenly?

Someone who could answer yes to any of the first four questions may be dependent upon cocaine. Someone who could answer yes to the second four questions is addicted to cocaine. If you answer yes to any of those eight questions, *please seek help*.

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Effects of Chronic Cocaine Abuse

The initial symptoms of cocaine use are subtle and easily overlooked. Nosebleeds, increased heart rate, nervousness and fidgeting are common indications of cocaine use. As use continues the health risks become more pronounced. Heart and respiratory problems develop. Cardiac and respiratory failure can occur even while the chronic user is not high. Cocaine erodes the membranes that it comes into contact with more with each use: Nasal tissue, cartilage, throat, esophagus, lung tissue, blood vessels. With medium or long-term use the body's systems can be damaged beyond their ability to heal themselves. **This leads to lifelong disability or death.**

Cessation and Recovery

For many, admitting that they are an addict is the hardest part of recovery. It is also the *crucial first step*. One symptom of addiction is the belief that one is not addicted. To begin healing one **must** admit that they are hurt. If you cannot decide if you are a cocaine addict, talk to your doctor. Your physician is legally obligated to keep this conversation private and can advise you on the first steps in your recovery.



Treatment

There are several methods to help make the transition to recovery as smooth as possible. While there is no single definition of recovery, a good working definition is *maintaining sobriety, eliminating withdrawal symptoms and minimizing cravings*. Treatments will focus on those goals.

Support groups and twelve-step programs are full of relapse stories. You are not alone: if quitting were easy, it wouldn't be such a big deal.

Most cocaine addiction treatment programs will use some or all of the following methods.

- **Detoxification** – or detox – is a period of purging the drug from the user's system and working through the worst withdrawal symptoms. The length of detoxification will depend on the severity of drug use. Withdrawal symptoms do not magically disappear after detox ends.
- **Behavioral Intervention** is stopping the drug use in order to give the user an opportunity to stop for good. This can be effected with Emotive Behavioral Therapy: A system focusing on adapting behavior.
- **Therapy** is an exploration of the attitudes and mental attributes that contributed to the abuser's cocaine susceptibility. Therapy will help a user identify their triggers and their reasons for seeking recovery.
- **Medication** seeks to minimize withdrawal symptoms and treat cocaine's ongoing physical effects. Medication usually takes the form of sedatives and anticonvulsants to ease withdrawal.

Treatment Facilities

Dealing with withdrawal can be too much for anyone to bear alone. *Medical supervision is necessary for detoxification*. Treatment facilities provide a nurturing environment & trained professionals. Finding one where you are comfortable is as important as your confidence in their services.

Inpatient facilities are either a hospital or clinic. Some of them seem like private homes or spas and are called **residential** programs. For the duration of one's stay, they remain within the facility. This creates an environment where it is difficult or impossible to obtain cocaine. Here the addict can hone their refusal skills.

Outpatient programs can take place nearly anywhere. They offer many of the same services as inpatient facilities with the notable exception of round-the-clock care. Outpatients enjoy more freedom than inpatients, allowing them to continue their personal and professional lives. This freedom, however, is added pressure to succeed on their own.

Cocaine withdrawal can be little more than a painful nuisance for the extremely light user but it can be **fatal** for the chronic, heavy user. If you use cocaine on a regular basis, *please seek medical help with your recovery*.

Paying For Treatment

Treatment can be free or costly. Payment assistance is available in many forms. Check your insurance policy, seek a charitable institution or check with your state Department of Health – many times, programs are free. Drug abuse counselors can help you find the right program for your situation. Financial aid is available.

You Can Do It

You are not alone: support is available.
Take control. Reach out.
Stop using cocaine today.

Abuse and Addiction

Abuse is any use of cocaine other than as a surgical anesthetic.

Addiction is dependency upon cocaine indicated by physical withdrawal symptoms, intense cravings and compulsively seeking and using the drug.

Many habitual cocaine addicts begin as **social** or **functional** cocaine users.

Social use is just what it sounds like: using cocaine to enhance a social experience. Cocaine is often encountered as a party drug, lending to its false air of fun and harmlessness. Many have been taken in by this mystique only to find themselves hooked. When the social user begins using privately they know they are in trouble.

Functional users might not seem to have a problem. They maintain their jobs, relationships and finances while using cocaine. This can be even more dangerous than if they had obvious symptoms: they can hide their problem and convince themselves that they are in control. They may think that cocaine is *helping* them with their life. They use it secretly while it slowly eats away at them from inside. When they try to stop, they learn the truth: they've given up control to cocaine.