

The Alcohol Service is a free service to the residents of, [Hammersmith and Fulham](#), [Kensington and Chelsea](#) and [Westminster](#). We are a welcoming service for people having trouble with alcohol use or who are affected by alcohol use issues. We offer a range of services including Family and Carers, Older peoples, and Counselling.

At these troubling times we are still here to help but working in different ways. Our staff are ready to support and help you stay safe. Why not join our open Zoom Coffee Mornings to find out more?

Please contact us: Tel: **0800 0147440** or email thealcoholservice.info@cgl.org.uk

www.thealcohol servicelondon.org

www.changegrowlive.org

[Twitter@Alcohol_Service](https://twitter.com/Alcohol_Service)



[Service User's Guide on Safe Withdrawal of Alcohol](#)

“Well, I can just reduce myself, can't I?”

If you drink daily, over time your body can become dependent on alcohol. When this happens, your central nervous system can no longer adapt easily to the lack of alcohol. Like many other prescribed or illegal medications, it is beneficial to reduce alcohol slowly. If you suddenly stop drinking, or reduce too quickly, this can result in seizures, hallucinations, or Delirium Tremens.

Long term excessive alcohol use results in changes in the receptors in the brain. Withdrawal seizures can happen when the person stops their alcohol intake or reduces too quickly. Seizures, or fits can cause brain damage due to lack of oxygen to the brain, as a result falls can be common. If you are prone to seizures or have a diagnosis of epilepsy, please contact The Alcohol Service prior to reducing intake.

Delirium Tremens is the most severe type of withdrawal syndrome. Its symptoms include:

- extreme confusion and agitation
- fever
- seizures
- tactile hallucinations (itching, burning, spiders crawling across your skin)
- auditory hallucinations (hearing non-existent sounds, voices or music)
- visual hallucinations (seeing non-existent images, televisions, or people)
- If you have severe symptoms, including a seizure, a high fever, hallucinations, and heart disturbances to seek immediate help.

Please call 111 if you need medical help.

For life threatening emergencies call 999

Believe in people

If you have had seizures or hallucinations before, please contact [The Alcohol Service](#). It may be advised you consider an inpatient detox and do not attempt to reduce your alcohol consumption. However, for some it will be suitable to slowly reduce your alcohol intake. Safety is key in reducing your alcohol intake. Go slow and safe.

“What should I look out for?”

Alcohol withdrawal symptoms can appear anywhere from six hours to a few days after your last drink. These usually include at least two of the following:

- tremors
- anxiety
- nausea and/or vomiting
- headache
- increased heart rate
- sweating
- irritability
- confusion
- insomnia
- nightmares

Withdrawals can be more noticeable when you wake up as you have less alcohol in your blood. If you normally have an alcoholic drink in the morning, please continue to do so, but not as much.

To keep these withdrawal symptoms at a minimum, and therefore safe, it is recommended to reduce your alcohol intake slowly over a period. Getting help from [The Alcohol Service](#) will support you with your plan.

General advice given to reduce no more than 2 units over two days, or one unit per day. Use your measuring cup to measure your units, if you are uncertain on how many units you are drinking please ask [The Alcohol Service](#) for advice.

Please keep your drink diary and record how many drinks you are having in a day. Also record what time of day you are drinking, and why? Are you drinking because of withdrawals? Because you are lonely? Stressed? Down? It is useful to look into your drinking habits and reasons you may be drinking.

You may also take note of how your body is reacting. If your hands are shaking and/or you are sweaty then your body is telling you it needs alcohol. Take a small amount of alcohol, this should stabilise your withdrawals after around 20 minutes. It is important not to let your withdrawals become noticeable or uncomfortable for you.

The more noticeable and uncomfortable your withdrawals are the more there is a risk of seizures or hallucinations.

Always keep your withdrawals to an absolute minimum, it is important you feel as comfortable as possible when reducing your alcohol consumption.

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