

Medications and what to expect when in hospital

Information and advice for patients

Alcohol Care Team

Why have I been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet as you are drinking alcohol at a harmful level and are possibly at risk of alcohol withdrawal.

There are a variety of medications which are used to treat alcohol withdrawal.

What to expect when in hospital

During the first 72 hours of your admission, you will be monitored frequently for any signs of alcohol withdrawal. Nursing staff will use an assessment tool to identify symptoms of alcohol withdrawal. Medication is only administered when you are showing signs of alcohol withdrawal.

You may find some questions you are asked are being repeated frequently.

These questions are asked to determine whether you need any medications and although this may be frustrating, are important to gain an accurate assessment.

The most common symptoms of alcohol withdrawal are fast heart rate, sweating, tremor and increased anxiety.

Know your medications

This is a brief guide of common medications that are used to treat alcohol withdrawal.

Pabrinex: is the brand name for a small yellow bag of fluid which is given through a vein, it is a rapid therapy for severe depletion of vitamins, given over the course of 3 days then switched over to a tablet called thiamine.

Thiamine: is a vitamin which reduces quickly in people who drink alcohol to excess. Thiamine deficiencies can cause an alcohol related brain injury. You will also received thiamine tablets to take home on discharge.

Diazepam: Is commonly used to treat symptoms of alcohol withdrawal. It can be given both orally or into a vein. Diazepam works on the same brain chemicals as alcohol and reduces withdrawal symptoms.

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Alcohol Detox

An alcohol detox normally lasts 3– 5 days. Should you not be fully detoxed during your admission the Alcohol Care Team will inform you of this and give advice on what to do on discharge.

You may be advised return to drinking but at a reduced amount. This is enough to treat withdrawal symptoms but not be intoxicated. You will also be offered a referral to community alcohol services.

Community alcohol services can help you to continue to reduce your intake in a safe and slow manner and provide a detox if needed.

Where to go for help

For Birmingham residents, CGL offer support and treatment.

Tel: 0121 227 5890

<https://www.changegrowlive.org/drug-and-alcohol-service-birmingham>

For Sandwell residents, Cranstoun offer support and treatment.

Tel: 0121 553 1333

<https://www.cranstoun.org/services/substance-misuse/cranstoun-sandwell/>

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) provide peer support. Face to face meetings and online. There are numerous meetings, Helpline.

Tel: 0800 9177 650 or visit

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Find-a-Meeting

Drinkline, national free helpline,

Tel: 0300 123 1110

Support for friends and family for a loved one who is drinking:

Friends and Family support group

<http://www.alternat-i-ves.org/index.html>

Al-anon offer peer support for family members and friends.

Tel: 020 7403 0888 or visit

www.al-anonuk.org.uk/meetings for details.

Alateen is for teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics.

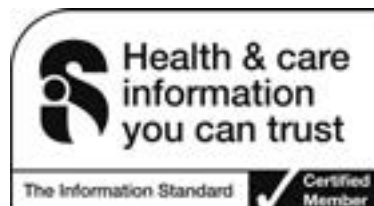
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For information email the General Service Office at:
enquiries@al-anonuk.org.uk

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