

What does it mean “not to stop using”?

Suddenly stopping or reducing your use before starting medically supervised withdrawal can be risky and should be avoided. Some people will use more than usual in the days just before they start treatment.

We ask that you not do this because it can make the withdrawal harder and riskier for your health. This means to continue to use enough of the substance (alcohol, GHB, or benzodiazepines) to feel okay physically and limit physical withdrawal symptoms.



Important

At any time, if you feel very sick or have serious physical discomfort, it is best to call 811, consult your pharmacist, your doctor, or go to the hospital emergency department right away.

Contact information

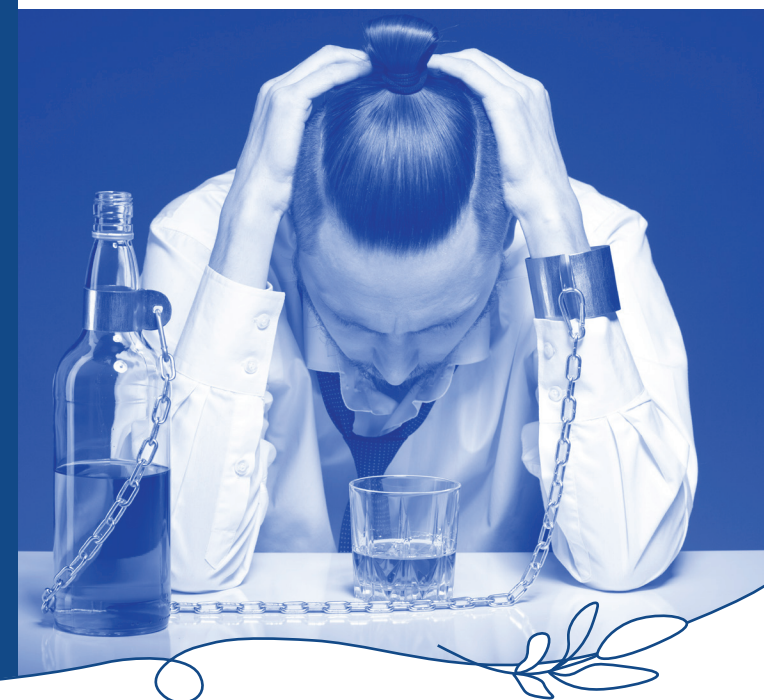
Addiction readaptation centres

- **CRD de Candiac**
450-619-6009 | 1-877-619-6009
201 boul. de l'Industrie, 3rd floor
Candiac
- **CRD de la rue Joliette**
450-651-3113 | 1-888-651-3113
1525 rue Joliette, Longueuil
- **CRD du boulevard Cousineau**
450-443-2100 | 1-800-363-9434
5110 boul. Cousineau, Saint-Hubert
- **CRD de Saint-Hyacinthe**
450-771-6622 | 1-866-770-6622
2115 boul. Casavant Ouest, suite 202
Saint-Hyacinthe
- **CRD de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu**
450-348-1600 | 514-875-6678
202 rue Saint-Louis
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu
- **CRD de la rue de l'Église**
450-373-5934 | 1-877-343-5934
11 rue de l'Église, 3rd floor
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield
- **CRD de Sorel-Tracy**
450-746-1226
61 rue Morgan, Sorel-Tracy

Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux
de la Montérégie-Ouest

Withdrawal Alcohol, GHB and benzodiazepines

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



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Centre intégré
de santé
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Québec



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Québec



You've decided to make a change, and we want to congratulate you on this wise decision.

Because we care about your health, we've put together some important information to help keep you safe when you change or stop using alcohol or certain substances.



What is withdrawal?

Your body tries to keep itself balanced. If you suddenly stop using alcohol, GHB, or medicines like Ativan, Rivotril, Xanax, or Valium (which are substances that slow down the central nervous system), you'll notice that your nervous system will react by becoming overactive. This causes the physical signs and symptoms of withdrawal.

What are the symptoms of withdrawal?

Withdrawal symptoms vary depending on several factors, such as the psychoactive substance used, the amount used, and how often it was used.

Stopping the use of alcohol, GHB, or benzodiazepines can cause symptoms and complications like:

- Trembling hands, arms, or the whole body
- Heavy sweating
- Numbness in the hands and feet
- Anxiety: feeling a knot in the stomach, strong nervousness
- Fast heartbeat: feeling heart palpitations

- High blood pressure
- Fever
- Nausea and vomiting
- Sleep problems
- Sensory problems: being very sensitive to sounds or light, tingling under the skin, blurred vision
- Confusion, disorientation
- Hearing or seeing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Withdrawal seizures

Sometimes, this overactivity can be dangerous for your health. It might cause you to hear or see things that aren't there (auditory and visual hallucinations), seizures, or a serious condition called delirium tremens. That's why it's important to get the appropriate medicine prescribed from a doctor if needed.

For alcohol and GHB, it usually takes about **7 to 10 days** for your nervous system to get back to normal. This is the normal time for withdrawal from these kinds of substances. It can take longer to recover from benzodiazepines.

When does withdrawal start?

Withdrawal starts when you suddenly stop or reduce using a substance. How intense the physical withdrawal symptoms are depends on how much and how often you used.

Why might you be asked "not to stop using"?

In some cases, withdrawal from alcohol, GHB, or benzodiazepines can put your health and safety at risk. **Receiving treatment under medical supervision would then be recommended.**

If your assessment results show that your withdrawal should be done under medical supervision, it's important to be careful so that you stay safe, even if you have never had problems with previous withdrawals.

You shouldn't stop using on your own.