

Is There an Antidote for Alcohol Toxicity?

Drinking large amounts of alcohol quickly can cause respiratory depression, coma, and even death. Is there an antidote for alcohol toxicity or acute alcohol poisoning?

Alcohol is a powerful depressant, slowing down all your brain functions, including those that keep you alive. While drinking prompts feelings of relaxation while also reducing anxiety, these effects don't last and require a person to keep drinking to sustain the euphoria.

When a person drinks heavily, alcohol toxicity is likely to result. That's because alcohol has a fixed rate at which a person's body can process and excrete it. Your liver metabolizes the alcohol, but it can only break down so much at one time. When more alcohol is consumed than what the liver can break down, the alcohol is redirected throughout the body.

Reversing Acute Alcohol Poisoning

Alcohol toxicity is always dangerous and can [easily be lethal](#). Even when alcohol poisoning doesn't rise to that level of harm, it can cause serious and lasting damage to a person's vital organs if it is not urgently addressed. Fortunately, there are treatments that can be given at an emergency room or other medical facility that will reverse acute alcohol poisoning. According to the National Library of Medicine, [metadoxine](#) is one such medication. Metadoxine works by increasing the speed at which a person's body [processes and excretes](#) alcohol.

There are no over-the-counter treatments for acute alcohol poisoning, and home remedies may make the situation even worse. The following traditional ways to try to reverse alcohol poisoning not only do not work but are also known to make a person even sicker.

- *Sleeping it off.* People suffering from alcohol poisoning tend to vomit and if left alone, can choke to death. Sleep also does nothing to make alcohol less poisonous and does not increase the speed with which alcohol is passed out of a person's system.
- *Black coffee, caffeine tablets, or other stimulants.* These do nothing to increase the metabolism of alcohol. While a person may urinate more, they're not excreting any more alcohol than they would normally.
- *Cold showers.* Exposure to cold water doesn't speed up alcohol's excretion.

Alcohol toxicity is a health emergency that must be treated by medical professionals immediately. When this level of care is received, a person suffering from acute alcohol poisoning can make a full recovery.

Identifying the Symptoms Of Alcohol Poisoning

Distinguishing severe intoxication from alcohol poisoning by a person's behaviors can be difficult. Always err on the side of safety if you're concerned about a person's well-being. These are the most critical signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning:

- Trouble staying awake
- Inability to be roused or unconsciousness
- Cold, clammy skin which may be bluish around the lips and fingernails
- Extreme confusion, slowed or sluggish responses
- Poor coordination, inability to walk
- Problems staying conscious.
- Low body temperature
- Irregular heartbeat or erratic pulse
- Slowed breathing (10 seconds or more between inhalations)
- Loss of bowel or bladder control
- Seizures, choking, vomiting

How Do You Treat Alcohol Poisoning?

Alcohol poisoning cannot be reversed at home. The first thing to do if you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning is to call 911. In a medical setting, healthcare professionals will use:

- **IV fluids:** Providers give intravenous (IV) fluids to treat [dehydration](#). Fluids can also increase blood sugar levels.
- **Oxygen:** Providers can give oxygen using a nasal cannula (flexible tube clipped to the nose). They may put a small tube into the windpipe if a person has trouble breathing.
- **Blood filtration:** If kidneys aren't able to do the job, providers may start [dialysis](#) to filter alcohol from the blood.
- **Medication.** As we've discussed, medications like metadoxine can speed up the rate at which alcohol leaves the body.

References

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