

SYNTHETIC CANNABIS WITHDRAWALS

It's time to stop...

If you or someone you know has been regularly using synthetic cannabis then read on.

WHEN YOU STOP USING

The first few days may be very intense and some users have reported strong symptoms and cravings for a few weeks. Most people can get through mild withdrawal by knowing what to expect and taking care of themselves by way of rest, mild exercise and keeping hydrated. Some natural remedies such as kava kava and valerian may help with sleep or agitation, with people also reporting a gradual return of wellbeing including increased energy, clarity of thought, motivation, productivity and happiness.

Here are some of the things that you may experience

Physical Health

Chest pains

Heart palpitations

Tremors

Seizures

Sweating

Headaches

Dizziness

Blurred vision

High blood pressure

Insomnia

Difficulty breathing

Constipation

Vomiting and diarrhoea

Weight loss

Dehydration

Pins and needles

Mental Health

Low mood

Suicidal feelings

Paranoia

Psychosis

Anxiety

Panic attacks

Forgetfulness

Difficulty concentrating

Feeling emotional

Sleeping problems

Confusion

Fear of dying

Craving

Irritability and aggression

HINTS FOR STOPPING

Get rid of all your synthetic cannabis

Allow yourself 10 days to get through the tough stuff. Days three and four will probably be the worst.

Remind yourself that the discomfort is because your body and brain are adjusting to being without synthetic cannabis. Things will and do get better.

Keep busy. Get straight friends to help you. Watch videos, go for walks, exercise and get out in the open air.

Keep your fluids up. Use electrolyte replacement drinks. Avoid caffeine.

Use warm baths or showers, hot pools, etc, to relax you.

Stock up on healthy food and drinks. Snack on small amounts.

Write down the reasons you are stopping and read them when it gets rough.

Avoid people, places or things associated with using. Screen all your mobile phone calls or texts and get rid of the losers.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

If your symptoms are severe or distressing go to your GP and tell them exactly what you have been using and what you are experiencing. Your GP will check your physical health and discuss options around dealing with sleeping difficulties, anxiety, cravings, nausea and vomiting.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

There are a number of other organisations with confidential support services you can contact. Drug services or addiction services are often listed alongside mental health services. They may be part of your local District Health Board or listed as independent organisations.

Voyagers (for under 18) 106 Commerce Street, Whakatane **07 308 8803** or **0800 486 947**

Bay Of Plenty Addiction Service (for over 18) based at Tauranga Hospital.....**07 579 8391**

SORTED Youth Service (for under 18) based at Tauranga Hospital**07 557 5052**

Mental Health Crisis Team (out of hours service from 4pm to 8am).....**0800 800 508**

NATIONAL NUMBERS

Alcohol and Drug Helpline (adults) - open 10am to 10pm ... **0800 787 797**
or visit www.addictionshelp.org.nz

Lifeline - open 24/7 **0800 543 354**

Narcotics Anonymous **0800 628 632**

Other helpful websites include: www.drugfoundation.org.nz and www.addictionblog.com