

What should I do if I relapse?

- Surround yourself with people who support your recovery process.
- Think about where the feelings that made you relapse came from. Understanding where they came from can help you cope better.
- Talk to someone about what you're feeling. Putting off what you're feeling may end in another relapse if you don't talk it through.
- Try not to isolate yourself. Even though going out with family or friends might not sound ideal at the moment, doing so in a safe, non-triggering environment can help take your mind off things and lift your spirits.
- Ask someone to help you. It is important to seek out your doctor or a therapist early on to prevent more relapses from happening.

What are some signs of a potential relapse?

- Changes in your attitude, like feeling less enthusiastic in recovery and less hopeful overall
- Changes in stress levels
- Denying that you are stressed, which can lead to future issues
- Changes in your day-to-day life, like changes in appetite (eating too much or too little) or eating habits (types of foods you are eating), or not showering
- Having a hard time making helpful decisions for yourself
- Distancing yourself from close friends, family, or loved ones who have been supporting you

Relapsing from Alcohol



What is relapse?

Relapse happens when someone drinks alcohol after a period of sobriety.

- Drinking again might bring back old behaviors.
- Relapses can be caused by stress, being around others who are drinking, strong cravings, and more.
- Relapses happen more often than people think, and when they do, it's OK! For many people, relapse is part of the process of recovery.
- Some people might only have a "slip," where they drink only once and not again.

Common relapse triggers

- Smelling alcohol
- Being in a place with alcohol
- Seeing alcoholic drinks
- Hanging around people who drink
- Losing a loved one
- Life stressors
- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse

Stages of relapse

Emotional relapse

You might not be actively thinking about drinking again, but daily events that cause even a little stress can trigger these thoughts. These events might be influenced by:

- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Anger
- Loneliness
- Poor sleeping habits
- Poor eating habits

Mental relapse

You might be in this stage if you're trying to decide whether it's a good idea to drink again. Part of you might be proud of your progress, but the other part of you might want to have one drink. Signs of this can be seen if you:

- Lie to yourself about how good drinking made you feel
- Spend time with people you used to drink with
- Find importance in your old habits
- Think about your past with alcohol

Physical relapse

You're in this final stage of relapse if your thoughts and old habits overcame your will to stop drinking. If they did, it's OK! Ninety percent of people in recovery have a relapse within four years of being sober.

It is important though to seek out help again to try and reduce the chance of another relapse. Talk to a family member, doctor, therapist, or anyone you're comfortable with to get more support.

How can I avoid a relapse?

It is important to follow your treatment plan and take any prescribed medication as recommended. It also can help to find ways to replace old habits with more-productive activities, such as:

- Attending peer support groups
- Cooking
- Exercising
- Art
- Crafts
- Social activities with family and friends
- Reading
- Playing a sport
- Volunteering