

**Patient presenting with a history of alcohol use requesting withdrawal support**

Are they acutely unwell requiring hospital admission?

**YES**

Arrange acute admission under appropriate team \*

**NO**

Complete AUDIT-C questionnaire

**AUDIT-C <5**

No further action required.

**AUDIT-C 5-10**

Unlikely person will require withdrawal medication.  
Discuss referral to **CADS Counselling** via e-referral or patient can self-refer by phone: 09 845 1818  
**DO NOT** prescribe diazepam  
Consider thiamine 50mg QID

**AUDIT-C 11 or 12  
Alcohol Dependent**

**Assess severity of alcohol dependence:**

- Number of SD consumed daily
- Presenting with symptoms of alcohol withdrawal (anxiety, sweating, tremor)
- Have experienced alcohol withdrawal symptoms or had a detox in the past
- Drinks overnight or first thing in the morning
- On regular benzodiazepines

**Assess suitability for withdrawal support in community**

+/- Drinking over 20 standard drinks daily?  
+/- Over 65 yo  
+/- Serious health problems (liver disease, COPD, heart disease)  
+/- Hx seizure  
+/- Hx DT's  
+/- Malnourished and at risk of Wernicke's encephalopathy  
+/- COVID positive

**No**

**Yes**

**Mild:**  
Drinking less than 10 SD daily  
And none of the above  
  
Then consider:  
**Diazepam for Mild Withdrawal**  
(see below)

**Moderate:**  
Drinking 10-20 SD  
And none of the above  
  
Then consider:  
**Diazepam for Moderate Withdrawal**  
(see below)

**Likely NOT appropriate to manage withdrawal in community**  
Consider admission to hospital for parenteral thiamine and medical oversight OR  
Make e referral to Addiction Services

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS YOUR PATIENT WITH A CADS DOCTOR CALL: 021 784 288**

**\* CADS Medical Detox is not able to admit patients acutely and if the patient requires urgent support they should be directed to hospital \***

## Management of Mild/Moderate Alcohol Withdrawal in the Community

- Before starting detox in the community:
  - Ensure the patient has a recent liver test
  - Do not start on a Thursday or Friday, as the patient may need assistance over the weekend
  - Ensure the patient has a support person at their home who can keep an eye on them
  - Inform the patient that if they relapse to drinking within 3 months you will not support another detox and they will require specialist input.
- The first dose of diazepam should be administered no sooner than 6 hours after the last drink.
- Arrange clinical review of patient every 24-48 hours – especially first few days- ideally face to face to check the CIWA-Ar (alcohol withdrawal scale) and check obs.
- These are guides only and can be adjusted as needed if the person becomes sedated or develops more severe withdrawal symptoms than anticipated.
- STOP withdrawal medication if the person accesses alcohol.
- If you would like to discuss with either a CADS doctor call: 021 784 288 or a community detox nurse call 021 549 817

### Diazepam for Mild Withdrawal (Guide only)

**Day (1):** 5mg QID  
**Day (2):** 5mg TDS  
**Day (3):** 5mg BD  
**Day (4):** 5mg nocte  
**Day (5):** 5mg nocte  
**Stop:** Do not continue diazepam.

We also recommend prescribing:

**Thiamine** 50mg QID (for one month)  
**Multivitamins** one twice daily (for one month)  
**Metoclopramide** 10mg PRN to TDS, (for nausea if indicated) or  
**Ondansetron** 4mg bd PRN

### Diazepam for Moderate Withdrawal (Guide only)

**Day (1):** 10 mg QID  
**Day (2):** 10mg TDS  
**Day (3):** 5mg QID  
**Day (4):** 5mg BD  
**Day (5):** 5mg nocte  
**Day (6):** 5mg nocte  
**Stop:** Do not continue diazepam.

We also recommend prescribing:

**Thiamine** 50mg QID (for one month)  
**Multivitamins** one twice daily (for one month)  
**Metoclopramide** 10mg PRN to TDS, (for nausea if indicated) or  
**Ondansetron** 4mg bd PRN

## CIWA-Ar: Obs assessment for patients detoxing

<b>Date</b>									
<b>Time</b>									
<b>Day of Detox</b>									
<b>Vital signs to be recorded on separate obs chart (detox unit only) or eVitals (all other inpatient areas) – Pulse, Respiratory Rate, O<sub>2</sub> saturation, BP, Temperature</b> <i>(tick when done)</i>									
<b>Nausea / Vomiting (0-7)</b> 0 – none, 1- mild nausea, no vomiting, 4 Intermittent nausea, 7 – constant nausea, frequent dry heaves and vomiting									
<b>Tremors (0-7)</b> 0 – no tremor, 1 – not visible but can be felt, 4 – moderate with arms extended, 7 – severe even with arms not extended									
<b>Anxiety (0-7)</b> 0 – none, ease, 1- mildly anxious, 4- moderately anxious or guarded, 7 – equivalent to acute panic									
<b>Agitation (0-7)</b> 0 – normal activity, 1 – somewhat normal activity, 4 – moderately fidgety and restless, 7 – passes or constantly thrashes about									
<b>Paroxysmal Sweats (0-7)</b> 0 – no sweats, 1 – barely perceptible sweating, palms moist, 4 – beads of sweat obvious on forehead, 7 – drenching sweat									
<b>Orientation (0-4)</b> 0 – orientated, 1 –uncertain about the date 2 – disorientated to date by no more than 2 days, 3 – disorientated to date by > 2 days 4 – disorientated to place and / or person									
<b>Tactile Disturbance (0-7)</b> 0 – none, 1- very mild itch P&N , numbness, 2 – mild itch, P& N, burning, numbness, 4 – moderate hallucinations 5 – severe hallucinations, 6 – very severe hallucinations 7 continuous hallucinations									
<b>Auditory Disturbances (0-7)</b> 0 – not present, 1 – very mild harshness / ability to startle, 2 – mild harshness / ability to startle, 3 – moderate harshness / ability to startle, 4 – moderate hallucinations, 5 – severe hallucinations, 6 – very severe hallucinations, 7 – continuous hallucinations									
<b>Visual Disturbances (0-7)</b> 0 – not present, 1 – very mild sensitivity, 2 – mild sensitivity, 3- moderate sensitivity, 4 – moderate hallucinations, 5 – severe hallucinations, 6 – very severe hallucinations, 7 – continuous hallucinations									
<b>Headache (0-7)</b> 0 – not present, 1 – very mild, 2 mild, 3 – moderate, 4 – moderately severe, 5 – severe, 6 – very severe, 7 – extremely severe.									
<b>Total CIWA-Ar Score: mild&lt;8, moderate 8-15, severe &gt;15</b>									
<b>RN Initials</b>									