

MOA of Alcohol

- Multiple; Not well understood
 - GABA receptor agonist
 - NMDA (*glutamate*) receptor antagonist
 - Believed to have either a direct or indirect effect on the mu-opioid receptor (*associated with alcohol cravings and euphoria; reward pathway*)
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- *GABA is an inhibitor NT*
 - *Glutamate is an excitatory NT*

Alcohol | Signs and Symptoms of Intoxication

- Slurred speech
 - Loss of coordination
 - Unsteady gait (staggering)
 - Nystagmus (rapid, involuntary eye movement)
 - Impaired memory or attention
 - Stupor or coma
- Can be mistaken for sedative intoxication ⇒ If the patient is conscious, ask them what they took*

Signs & Symptoms of Alcohol Withdrawal

- Sweating or HR > 100 BPM
 - ↑ hand tremor
 - Insomnia
 - Nausea ± Vomiting
 - Transient visual, tactile, or auditory hallucinations
 - Psychomotor agitation
 - Anxiety
 - Tonic-Clonic Seizures
- Tonic-Clonic Seizure: a seizure that involves a loss of consciousness and violent muscle contractions*

PK of Alcohol

- Absorption Small intestine
 Delayed gastric emptying and/or presence of food delays absorption
- Metabolism Zero-Order
 Metabolized by alcohol dehydrogenase
- Elimination Mostly into CO₂ and water

Treatment of Alcohol Intoxication

- ED visit, hospitalization, ICU admissions
 - Supportive care based on symptoms and BAC
 - ABC's [Airway, Breathing, Circulation]
 - Manage nausea and vomiting
 - Prevent aspiration
 - Replace fluids (ie banana bags)
- Banana bags: Thiamine 100 mg, Folic Acid 1 mg, Multivitamin, ± magnesium*

Clinical Presentation of Alcohol Withdrawal

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 6 to 12 hours | Minor Withdrawal |
| 12 to 24 hours | Alcohol Hallucinosiis |
| 24 to 48 hours | Withdrawal Seizures |
| 72 to 96 hours | Delirium Tremens (DT) |
- *Onset is measured based on the time of the patient's last drink*
 - *Could be sooner in more severe cases*



Alcohol Withdrawal Presentations Defined

Minor Withdrawal Peaks at 24 to 36 hours

May last up to 5 days

Presence of 2 to 3 symptoms of withdrawal

Tremors, anxiety, headache, diaphoresis, palpitations, nausea

Severe Withdrawal Presence of ≥ 6 symptoms

Alcoholic hallucinosis (visual is most common; auditory or tactile); generally resolves within 48 hours

Seizures (generalized, tonic-clonic; can happen within hours of last drink)

Delirium Tremens (DTs) Delirium, Disorientation, agitation, mydriasis, tachycardia, HTN, Temp $> 104F$, diaphoresis

Onset: 2 to 5 days after last drink

Prevalence: 3 to 5% of pt's with untreated alcohol withdrawal

Mortality rate: 5 to 15%

Risk Factors of Withdrawal

- Environmental: increased frequency of quantity of consumption, prior withdrawals, concomitant sedative, hypnotic, or anxiolytic drugs
- Genetic: family history of withdrawal

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