

Recognising Withdrawal

Nursing

What withdrawal looks like by substance group, and which are dangerous.

Patterns are typical rather than universal, and vary with use and health.

Substance group	Withdrawal features	Danger
Alcohol	Tremor, sweating, agitation	Seizure, delirium
Benzodiazepines	Anxiety, insomnia, tremor	Seizure
Opioids	Cramps, yawning, diarrhoea	Distressing, rarely fatal
Stimulants	Fatigue, low mood, sleep	Low mood, suicidality
Nicotine	Irritability, craving	Not dangerous

Educational reference. Alcohol and sedative withdrawal are medical emergencies. Local withdrawal protocols and prescriptions govern.