

Facts about Cravings

Cravings are a common occurrence when stopping or reducing alcohol and/or drug use. Understanding cravings helps people to overcome them, so here are some simple facts.

1. Cravings are the result of long-term alcohol and/or other drug use and can continue for some time after the use has stopped. People with a history of heavier use might experience stronger or more frequent urges. These are *common*.
2. Cravings can be triggered by people, places, things, feelings, situations, or anything associated with past use. Cravings are *predictable*.
3. A craving is just like a wave at the beach. Every wave in a set starts off small, builds up to its highest point, and then breaks and flows away to shore. Each individual wave never lasts more than a few minutes. A craving is just the same. It starts off small and then builds up. But it peaks, just like a wave, and will eventually break and disappear. This whole process usually doesn't last more than minutes. Cravings are *time-limited*.
4. Cravings will lose their power if force is not given to them by using or drinking in response. Even if use occurs only once in a while, it will still keep those cravings alive. Cravings are like a stray animal – keep feeding them and they will keep coming back. So in a very real sense these cravings are *controllable*.
5. Cravings tend to be stronger earlier on, then weaken, and eventually fade over time.
6. Each time a person does something other than drink and/or use others drugs, the craving loses power.
7. Stopping alcohol and other drug use completely is the quickest way to get rid of the cravings.
8. There are medications that help people manage cravings for alcohol and some other drugs.