

The Gallus Detox Guide to:

Dangers Associated With Polysubstance Use



Gallus
— MEDICAL —

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Thank You

Thank you for downloading this guide. At Gallus Detox, we know that polysubstance use is common. We also know that using multiple substances simultaneously can increase your risk of physical harm, emotional instability, overdose, and sudden death. The good news is polysubstance use can be treated. Detox is the first step toward that treatment.

Trying to detox from drugs and alcohol on your own is risky, dangerous, and challenging. Most people who try to quit addictive substances cold turkey fail. Consider the Gallus Method for addiction detox instead. We:

- **Are Joint Commission accredited**
- **Use evidence based IV therapy and oral medication protocols that prevent cross-addiction**
- **Effectively treat withdrawal symptoms**
- **Prioritize safety, effectiveness, and compassion**

Undergoing detox from multiple substances can be challenging. But give us a week of your life, and our highly experienced medical experts will give you your life back.

Contact us today at **866-296-5242** if you or someone you love struggles with polysubstance use. We want to help you break free of addiction so you can recover, enroll in a treatment program, and get your life back on track.

The Gallus Detox Team



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What is Polysubstance Use?

Polysubstance use is taking two or more drugs simultaneously or within a short period. Combined drug use may include prescription drugs, illegal drugs, or alcohol. Dangers of polysubstance use include an increased chance of falls, risky behavior, physical or mental harm, or overdose, all of which may result in death.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cite startling facts about polysubstance use, warning over 250 Americans die every day from drug use, and nearly half of overdose deaths involve [polysubstance use](#).

Dangers Associated with Polysubstance Use

Some of the dangers of polysubstance abuse include:

- **Increased risk of addiction.**
- **Development of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety**
- **Hallucinations caused by taking too many drugs at once**
- **Increased severity of adverse side effects**
- **Health problems and chronic conditions such as hepatitis C**
- **Increased risk of overdose**

Polysubstance use may be intentional or unintentional

[National Institute on Drug Abuse statistics](#) reported almost 92,000 people in the United States died from a drug-involved overdose in 2020, with the primary drivers including illicit drugs and prescription opioids.

Just because your doctor prescribed a drug does not make it safe. If you do not use medication as prescribed or fail to tell your doctor about other prescribed or illegal drugs you are using, the combination may be lethal. Never take a drug that your doctor has not prescribed for you, and always use it as prescribed by your doctor.

If you use drugs on purpose, you may take one drug to change the effects of another drug. You might also use drugs without knowing it. These actions are called unintentional polysubstance use. An example of this is when two drugs are mixed together.

Unintentional polysubstance use frequently occurs when drug dealers mix their product with deadly fentanyl. Almost [85 percent of overdose deaths](#) involve fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, or methamphetamine. Most often, overdose deaths result from a mixture of these drugs.



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Polysubstance use and stimulants

Illegal drugs like cocaine, ecstasy (MDMA), methamphetamines, and prescription drugs like Adderall and Dexedrine are known as “uppers” because they stimulate the central nervous system, increasing alertness, energy, and a [sense of euphoria](#).

Taking too great a dose, combining one stimulant with another, or combining a stimulant with other drugs is dangerous and may lead to liver damage, brain damage, heart damage, or death.

Combining stimulants can cause a hyper state of alertness, extended wakefulness, and loss of appetite. Severe reactions, including rapid breathing, psychosis, paranoia, heart attack, increased body temperature, stroke, tremors, or seizures, may signal an overdose and should be considered medical emergencies.

Polysubstance use and depressants

Doctors prescribe depressants like Valium, Xanax, Halcion, Ativan, and Ambien to relieve insomnia, anxiety, and [muscle spasms and prevent seizures](#). Opioids and benzodiazepines are also classified as depressants and have a sedative effect.

When used illegally at high doses or combined with other drugs, the user may experience intense euphoria, making depressants valuable as street drugs. If you combine a depressant with other depressants, including alcohol, your breathing may become so slow that brain damage or death can occur.

Besides a dangerously low respiratory rate, [warning signs of an overdose](#) may include an altered mental state, confusion, seizures, respiratory distress, tremors, and unconsciousness.

If you have taken a depressant long-term or at high doses, you should never stop it abruptly. Withdrawing from depressants can be life-threatening and should always be done under close medical supervision.



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Mixing stimulants and depressants

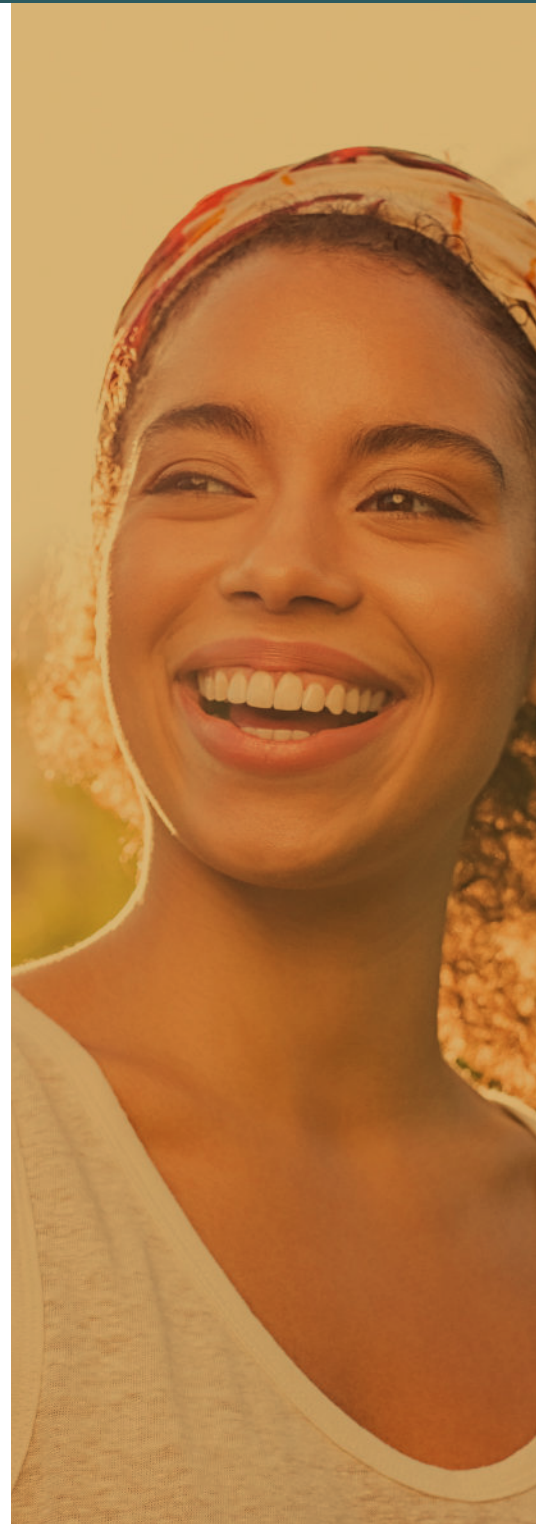
Taking a stimulant and depressant together is very dangerous and, unfortunately, very common. The practice of “speedballing,” combining an opioid like heroin with a stimulant like cocaine or methamphetamine, has a high potential for overdose.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse warns side effects of taking a stimulant and depressant concurrently may include:

- **Incoherence**
- **Stupor**
- **Blurred vision**
- **Mental impairment**
- **Severe sleep deprivation**
- **Uncontrolled motor skills**
- **Increased risk of fatal stroke, heart attack, aneurysm, or respiratory failure**

You have no way of knowing what an illegally purchased drug contains. Drug dealers often mix speedballs and other street drugs with fentanyl, which is 50 times more potent than heroin. You may unintentionally get a dose that kills you.

Whether you are combining stimulants and depressants to achieve a more significant euphoric effect, to decrease the adverse effects of a prescribed depressant, or for another reason, you may be risking your life.



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Polysubstance use and alcohol

Mixing drugs and alcohol is another dangerous practice of polysubstance users. If you consume alcohol, which is a depressant, with another depressant, your breathing and heart rate could slow to dangerous, possibly fatal, levels.

The CDC warns the combination of alcohol and other drugs puts you at an increased “[risk of overdose](#) and serious damage to the brain, heart, and other organs.” [According to experts at the Mayo Clinic](#), using drugs and alcohol may worsen symptoms of depression and anxiety, intensify side effects of sleep meds and pain meds, cause a dangerous rise in blood pressure, impair judgment, motor control, and reaction time, and adversely affect your quality of sleep.

Studies find common factors in polysubstance use

A [study published in the International Journal of Drug Policy](#) found that most people who use multiple drugs have a history of drug use lasting years or decades. The most common reasons people combine drugs include:

- **Deliberately trying to increase the psychoactive effect by adding drugs**
- **Attempting to manage unwanted side effects of a drug**
- **Trying to self-medicate chronic pain, anxiety, or depression**
- **Trying to manage cravings or other withdrawal symptoms**

[According to a study published in the American Journal of Public Health](#), young, white, unemployed adults without health care coverage and with a lower level of education have a higher risk of polysubstance use. People living with a disability or suffering from anxiety or a mood disorder were also more likely to use multiple drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

Researchers continue to identify a disturbing upward drug and alcohol use trend since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Various studies have found a significant rise in substance use and drug overdoses in the United States since the government declared the pandemic a national emergency in March 2020.

Provisional data from the CDC identified an increase of 28.5 percent in drug overdose deaths in the United States between April 2020 and April 2021. It is likely many of those deaths involved polysubstance use.



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How to safely detox from multiple drugs

Withdrawal symptoms vary depending on the drug or combination of drugs used and can be severe or even life-threatening. Whether you use one drug or multiple drugs concurrently, enrolling in a quality medical detoxification, or detox, program ensures you will be safer and more comfortable throughout the process.

Medical detox facilities provide round-the-clock patient monitoring of vital signs and IV fluids containing medications and nutritional supplements to help decrease cravings and make you more comfortable. Some detox centers offer medication-assisted detox and medication replacement therapy. You remain under constant medical supervision, ensuring a quick response to any adverse withdrawal symptoms.

Gallus Medical Detox

Detox is the first step in your recovery process and can be frightening and uncomfortable. However, specialized programs like Gallus Medical Detox put your safety, comfort, and dignity first.

Gallus is considered an industry leader in medical detox. Our compassionate staff has decades of experience working with polysubstance detox. We are recognized by the Joint Commission, the nation's largest standards-setting and accreditation body in healthcare, as providing excellence in patient care and clinical expertise. We are also recognized by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) level III as a medically monitored inpatient detoxification center.

Our proprietary program, the Gallus Method, provides the highest quality care and individualized treatment plans to deliver outstanding patient outcomes. We have used the latest evidence-based medical protocols based on the safest and most effective procedures to design our detoxification programs.

At Gallus, we can help you detox more safely from any addictive substance, including opioids, stimulants, benzodiazepines, alcohol, or any combination of substances at the same time.

[Contact](#) us for more information.



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Say Goodbye To Polysubstance Use

Polydrug abuse is dangerous, but there is hope. With the help of a medically-supervised detox program, you or someone you love can overcome addiction and get back on track to a healthy, sober life. Contact us today if you or someone you know struggles with polysubstance abuse. Our scientifically-proven detox method can help you recover and reclaim your life from addiction.

References

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[FADAA, Speedballing Fact Sheet](#)

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[Mayo Clinic, Dangers of Mixing Antidepressants and Alcohol](#)

