



## Facts about cravings

Cravings are a natural part of changing drug use. This means that you won't have any more difficulty changing your drug use than anybody else does. Understanding cravings helps people to overcome them, so let's go through some simple facts.

Cravings are the result of long-term alcohol/other drug use and can continue long after your use has stopped. So, people with a heavier history of use will experience stronger urges.

Cravings can be triggered by: people, places, things, feelings, situations or anything else that has been associated with alcohol/other drug use in the past.

A craving is just like a wave at the beach. Every wave in a set starts off small, and builds up to its highest point, and then it 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 – with physical parts, behaviours and thoughts. But, it reaches peak, just like a wave, and it will eventually break, and disappear. This whole process usually doesn't last more than about 10 minutes.



Cravings will only lose their power if you don't add force to them by drinking/using. Even if you use only once in a while, you will still keep those cravings alive. Cravings are like a stray cat – if you keep feeding them, they will keep coming back.



Like the picture below, each time a person does something other than drink or take drugs when they are craving, the craving will lose its power. The peak of the craving wave will become smaller, and the waves will be further apart.

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Quitting alcohol/drugs totally, is the best and quickest way to get rid of the cravings.

Cravings are strongest in the early parts of quitting/cutting down, but people may continue to experience cravings for the first few months and sometimes even years after the drug use has ceased.

Each craving will not always be less intense than the previous one. Be aware that sometimes, particularly in response to stress and certain triggers, the peak will return to the maximum.