

What is Precipitated Withdrawal in Addiction? An In-Depth Guide

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When it comes to drug or alcohol addiction treatment, withdrawal symptoms are part of the recovery process. These symptoms vary from one individual to another and are often different for every substance. With proper management, those in recovery can weather these symptoms, often

However, not all withdrawal is caused by abstinence from a chosen substance of abuse.

What is Precipitated Withdrawal?

Precipitated withdrawal refers to the abrupt onset of withdrawal symptoms caused by medications or medication-assisted treatment (MAT). This most commonly occurs in individuals undergoing addiction treatment for opioid dependence. It happens when the medication they're given ends up interacting with the same receptors in the brain as the opioids. This results in an abrupt and intense onset of uncomfortable, and sometimes serious, withdrawal symptoms that may be more severe than typical symptoms.

Why Does Precipitated Withdrawal Happen?

Precipitated withdrawal happens when the medication introduced during MAT (e.g. buprenorphine) displaces opioids from the receptors in the brain. This sudden displacement triggers the onset of withdrawal symptoms.

One instance when this happens is when an individual in recovery takes MAT medications before they fully detox from the opioids they were addicted to. Taking these medications too early in the recovery process before properly detoxing means that the body is suddenly forced to do without the drugs it was used to. The body's failure to adjust to the deprivation precipitates withdrawal, characterized by severe withdrawal symptoms.

Symptoms of Precipitated Withdrawal

The symptoms of precipitated withdrawal closely mirror those of traditional opioid withdrawal but tend to be more intense. They include:

- Agitation
- Fever, intense sweating and chills
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Abdominal pain and cramping
- Muscle aches and pains
- Insomnia
- Profound anxiety or agitation
- Elevated heart rate and blood pressure

How Long Does Precipitated Withdrawal Last?

The duration of precipitated withdrawal varies with every person and depends on factors such as the type and amount of opioids previously used, the specific medications involved as well as individual metabolism. Usually, the symptoms will peak within a few hours after administration of the precipitating medication and could last as long as 24-72 hours before subsiding.

How to Avoid Precipitated Withdrawal

To minimize the risk of precipitated withdrawals, the following should be done:

- A thorough assessment of the patient's history of opioid use, the last dose taken and their overall health should be done before initiating MAT.
- Patients should be given enough time between their last dose of opioids and the administration of MAT medications.
- MAT medications should be initiated at low doses and adjusted according to the patient's tolerance.
- Only trust a reputable and recognized treatment facility such as [Findlay Recovery Center](#) to guide your recovery journey. As a top-rated addiction treatment facility in Ohio, we are dedicated to providing affordable, evidence-based [treatment programs](#) to help individuals beat addiction. [Contact us today](#) and our team of professional and experienced treatment specialists will be glad to help you recover from addiction.

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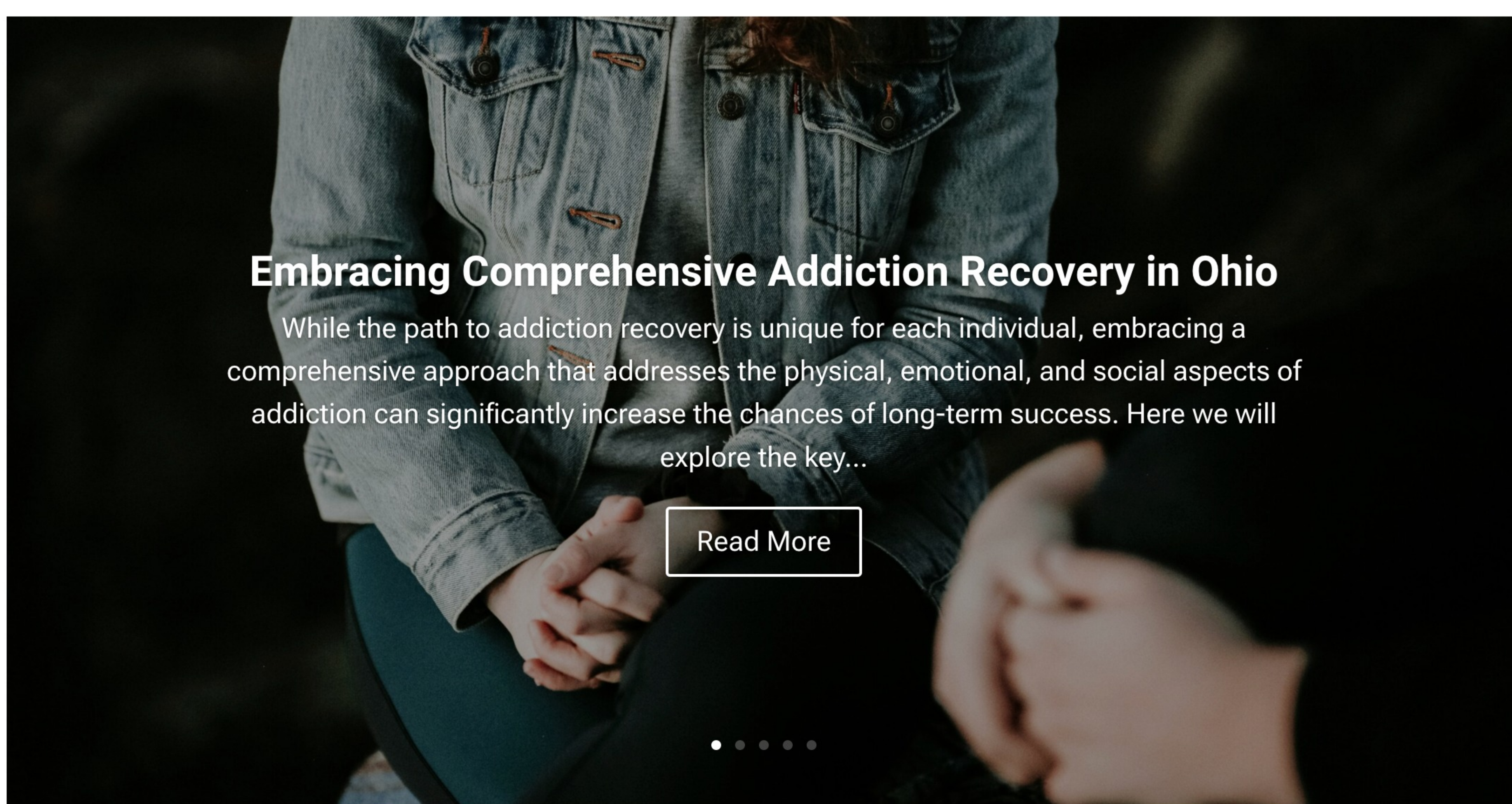
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