

# Cocaine Addiction

When the High Fades Fast but the Need Keeps Going



## What is Cocaine Addiction?

**Cocaine addiction** is a chronic brain disorder driven by the substance's intense, short-lived surge of dopamine, which rapidly rewires the brain's reward system. Because the high lasts only minutes, repeated use escalates quickly as the brain demands more to reach the same effect. No FDA-approved medication exists to treat cocaine use disorder, making sustained recovery without long-term behavioral support exceptionally difficult.

## What Does It Look Like?

- **Binge Cycles Followed by Crashes**  
They use heavily for hours or days, then disappear into exhaustion, depression, and sleep.
- **Erratic Energy and Unpredictable Mood Swings**  
Intense confidence and agitation give way without warning to irritability, paranoia, or withdrawal.
- **Money Disappearing Quickly**  
Money vanishes in a single night or over a weekend, with vague or contradictory explanations.
- **Physical Signs That Accumulate Over Time**  
Unexplained weight loss, nosebleeds, dilated pupils, and restlessness that the family can't account for.

## Why Does Cocaine Addiction Become Chronic?

When someone returns to cocaine after repeated treatment attempts, the pattern reflects how the substance use is deeply ingrained in the person's behavior and brain chemistry.

- 1) **Cocaine Hijacks the Brain's Reward System**  
Chronic use depletes natural dopamine function, making it difficult to experience pleasure or motivation without the drug.
- 2) **Time Needed to Treat Neurological Disruption**  
Short-term programs may address withdrawals, but the ingrained behaviors and cognitive impairment can last months.
- 3) **Underlying Depression, Anxiety, and Trauma**  
Most chronic cocaine relapsers have co-occurring mood or anxiety disorders that previous programs failed to diagnose or adequately treat.

### **Prevalence:**

**4.3 Million** Americans used cocaine in the past year<sup>1</sup>

### **Co-Occurrence:**

**Up to 73%** of treatment-seeking individuals with CUD have a co-occurring mental health diagnosis<sup>2</sup>

### **Relapse Risk:**

**40-60%** of individuals with SUD relapse after treatment<sup>3</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup>SAMHSA, *2024 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2025)*. <sup>2</sup>Schwartz et al., *Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation (2022)*. <sup>3</sup>NIDA, *Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: The Science of Addiction (2024)*.

## Long-Term Treatment for Cocaine Addiction

Cocaine depletes the brain's dopamine system over years of chronic use. A short-term program can manage the initial crash, but it can't **restore neurological function or address underlying mental health conditions** such as depression, anxiety, and trauma that effectively sustain the cycle of relapse. Families watch their loved one leave short-term programs appearing stable, only to relapse within weeks.

Our long-term, progress-based model **gives the brain time to recalibrate while building coping skills**, accountability, and behavioral patterns that replace cocaine's role. Clients advance through treatment as they demonstrate real behavioral change.



*“Cocaine detox convinces families their loved one is fine long before they actually are. They see the energy return and believe it's real recovery. The work of rebuilding how someone thinks, relates, and copes takes months, not weeks.”*

 **Brook McKenzie, LCDC**  
CEO, Burning Tree Ranch



## Dual Diagnosis Treatment for Cocaine Addiction

When cocaine addiction is treated in isolation, the conditions driving the use remain active. Depression, anxiety, PTSD, and personality disorders **co-occur with cocaine use disorder at significantly elevated rates**, and each condition reinforces the other. Treating one without the other leaves the cycle intact.

At Burning Tree Ranch, we create an **individualized treatment plan addresses co-occurring conditions** alongside cocaine dependence through evidence-based therapies including CBT, DBT, EMDR, and trauma-informed care, building toward lasting, sustainable sobriety.

### Dual Diagnosis Defined:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



### Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation's only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at [www.BurningTree.com](http://www.BurningTree.com).

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