Getting ready to ask for help

You do not need the perfect words

Start with what worries you

You can ask for help without knowing what treatment you need. Example: "I am worried about my drinking. I have tried to change it and I would like support." Write a few notes if speaking feels difficult.

Bring the information that helps

Tell a GP or treating clinician about your drinking pattern, last drink, previous withdrawal, other substances, medicines and health concerns. Be honest about symptoms and safety worries so they can assess what care is appropriate.

Ask practical questions

Try: "What are my options?", "How do I change my drinking safely?", "What will this cost?" and "Who can help while I wait?" Ask for written next steps or bring a trusted person if you would like support.

Make the first contact manageable

Choose a service and a time to call or book. If the first option cannot help, ask where to try next. You deserve respectful care. Do not wait for an appointment if there is immediate danger or a medical emergency; call 000.

Before you change your drinking

If you drink heavily or regularly, need alcohol to feel steady, or have had withdrawal before, speak with a doctor before stopping or sharply reducing. Alcohol withdrawal can be life-threatening. Shaking, sweating or feeling unwell after cutting down needs prompt medical advice. Call 000 for seizures, severe confusion or hallucinations.

Australia: Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline 1800 250 015 (free, confidential advice). Lifeline 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support). Call 000 if there is immediate danger or a medical emergency.

Make it personal

Write a few words. You can leave questions blank or talk them through with someone.

What I am worried about and want help with...

My drinking, withdrawal history and health details to share...

Questions about safety, options, access and costs...

The person or service I will contact and when...

What I will do if unavailable, and support while I wait...

You do not have to do this alone.

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Safety and support sources: healthdirect.gov.au/alcoholism; adf.org.au/insights/safely-withdrawing-alcohol/; lifeline.org.au/131114; medicarementalhealth.gov.au/provider/national-alcohol-and-other-drug-hotline-16469. Checked 1 October 2026.