



Can you get addicted?

Yes, mixing both alcohol and cocaine has an effect that makes you feel that you are less drunk and have more energy initially. The quick 'pick me up' effect that cocaethylene has can become addictive and can enable longer drinking sessions, with users sometimes drinking continually whilst using cocaine and without stopping to eat or drink.

The more intense your drinking and cocaine use becomes, the more risk you are at for having permanent damage to your heart and liver.



Contact us to find out more

Call 0300 200 2400

Lines are open 24/7

recoverynearyou.org.uk

5-9 Pitt Street, Wolverhampton WV3 0NF

Getting support

Recovery Near You can provide a free confidential service including one-to-one support, group work, medication, and relapse prevention for people who are concerned about their substance use.

Additionally, you can also access support for your substance use at:

drugwise.org.uk

breakingfreeonline.com

smartrecovery.org.uk

talktofrank.com

ukna.org



**Wolverhampton
Substance Misuse Service**

**Cocaethylene
THE FACTS**



What is cocaethylene?

Cocaethylene is a chemical reaction that is made inside your body when alcohol and cocaine are combined.

Cocaethylene is formed by the liver when cocaine and ethanol coexist in the blood. Cocaethylene can cause you to drink more as it gives your body the illusion that you are sobering up. Cocaethylene is more harmful than cocaine and alcohol taken independently. It takes twice as long for cocaethylene to leave your body as it does for cocaine alone.

The addition of cocaethylene to the alcohol and cocaine already in the system can produce effects that are much more powerful than the effects that alcohol or cocaine alone produce.

Negative side effects

- Cocaethylene can make you feel constantly tired and lacking energy
- Cocaethylene can leave you feeling down and having low mood, causing increased suicidal tendencies
- Cocaethylene can lead to unsafe sexual behavior due to poor judgment and impulsive decision making. Can you be sure that you will use a condom? Unsafe sex can lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Long-term effects

- You are more at risk of a blood borne virus (BBV) – sharing snorting equipment (rolled up banknotes or straw) is potentially very risky, as a tiny amount of blood could go from the lining of one persons nose to another. Cocaine, and many of the substances it is mixed with, can damage the lining of your nose and leave you open to infection. Blood can be transmitted on snorting straws, even microscopic amounts are sufficient
- Reduction of sex drive, meaning you might struggle to get an erection

Health risks

Cocaethylene has damaging effects on both the heart and the brain, some of which can be fatal:

- Chest pain
- Respiratory failure
- Compromised functioning of the immune system
- Stroke
- Seizures and convulsions
- Sudden death (increased by 18-25 times)



- Depression, causing suicidal tendencies
- Panic attacks
- Poor judgement and impulsive decision-making
- Lower self-esteem
- Loss of smell
- Impaired memory and ability to learn

