

## Alcohol Withdrawal (AW) vs Delirium Tremens (DT)

| Feature                 | AW (general withdrawal)                  | DT (severe withdrawal subtype)                   |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Timing after last drink | 6–24 hr (peak 24–48 hr)                  | ~48–96 hr (often day 3–4)                        |
| Consciousness           | Alert / oriented $\pm$ anxious           | Confusion, disorientation, delirium              |
| Hallucinations          | $\pm$ visual/tactile, insight may remain | Vivid hallucinations, no insight                 |
| Autonomic signs         | $\uparrow$ HR, tremor, sweaty, nausea    | Very high HR ( $>120$ ), high BP, fever          |
| Tremor                  | Fine, common                             | Coarse, marked                                   |
| Seizures                | 6–24h early withdrawal seizures          | Can occur but DT = delirium + autonomic storm    |
| Risk                    | Moderate                                 | Life-threatening emergency                       |
| Management setting      | Often outpatient if mild + safe          | ED/ICU – benzodiazepines + supportive + thiamine |

Mnemonic: DT = Delirium + Tremor + Tachycardia + Temperature

Clinical pearl: All DT is alcohol withdrawal, but not all alcohol withdrawal is DT.