

# How to cope with football withdrawal after the Super Bowl

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After the final play of the Super Bowl, millions of fans will go through withdrawal symptoms from not being able to watch football for months.

Loyola University Medical Center psychiatrist Dr. Angelos Halaris describes the effects this has on the brain and offers tips on how fans can cope.

Halaris explains that when a person engages in a pleasurable activity, such as watching a [football](#) game, a neurotransmitter (brain chemical) called dopamine is released in a part of the brain called the [nucleus accumbens](#).

When the pleasurable activity ends, the person is left with a feeling of deprivation. It's similar to what a smoker feels when deprived of a cigarette - except there's no quick fix like a cigarette for the football fan.

"When the football season is over and there's no other game on the schedule for months, you're stuck, so you go through withdrawal," Halaris said.

- For hard-core fans, the feeling can be similar to post-holiday blues, Halaris said.
- Halaris offers these tips for fans who suddenly have to face months without football:
- Don't go cold turkey. Watch football on YouTube, or on recordings, in gradually diminishing amounts.

- Share your feelings of withdrawal and letdown with a friend or spouse.
- While it can be unpleasant, football withdrawal is not serious enough to require antidepressants or other medications. And do not self-medicate with drugs or alcohol.
- Most important, buck up. "You're just going to have to basically tough it out until football starts up again," Halaris said.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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