



How do I talk to my doctor about treatment?

Talking to your doctor or nurse about medical treatment for OUD can be hard. Writing your questions before your appointment may be helpful. Here are some questions you might ask:

- How can medicine help my recovery?
- What medicine do you think is best for me? Why is it the best for me?
- What are possible side effects?
- What other steps should I take to help my recovery?



How long do I need to take medicine?

It depends. Many people take medicine every day for a long time, sometimes for the rest of their lives. We don't ask people who take cholesterol medicine to stop when it's working. The same is true for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD) and other long-term conditions.

Can I become addicted to the medicines used to treat OUD?

Methadone and buprenorphine don't replace one addiction with another. Though your body can build a dependence on medication over time, this is not the same as addiction. These medicines help restore balance to your brain so you can heal and stay strong in your recovery. Your treatment team will work with you to find the right medicine that lowers opioid cravings and withdrawals to help improve your overall well-being.

What happens if I take an opioid while I'm taking one of the OUD treatment medicines?

Using a prescription opioid or recreational drugs while using medicines that treat addiction can be dangerous. This can cause trouble breathing, coma, and even death. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns. They may be able to prescribe options that do not interact, or they may change your dose. It's important to tell your doctor about all other medicines you use, including vitamins and herbal supplements. Don't stop using any medicines without first talking to your doctor.

Where can I find more information?

For more information, please visit: <https://dmh.mo.gov/ada/provider/medicationassistedtreatment.html>.

Medical treatment for opioid use disorder



Medicine can help you or a loved one recover from opioid use disorder

This resource created by:



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What is medical treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD)?

Medical treatment for OUD is when your doctor or nurse gives you medicine to help you stop craving opioids. Heroin, Fentanyl, OxyContin®, and Percocet® are examples of opioids. Specially trained physicians, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants can all prescribe this medicine.



Is medicine all I need for my recovery?

It depends. You may need other services to help you get out of the cycle of addiction and rebuild your life, like:

- Talking to a counselor about what leads to your drug use
- Meeting with other people like you who are also in treatment
- Getting help to find recovery housing
- Getting help finding a job

for other resources visit: www.nomodeaths.org

What medicines are available?

1 Buprenorphine

Can be taken orally every day as a medication called Subutex or Suboxone, or can be taken as a once monthly shot as called Sublocade or Probuphine

Pros

- Lowers cravings for many people and makes it easier to stay away from opioids
- Decreases risk of overdose
- Medications taken orally like Subutex or Suboxone are prescriptions that can be filled at your local pharmacy
- Injectable medications like Sublocade and Probuphine require going to the clinic and getting the shot only once a month

Cons

- Can cause withdrawal if there are still a lot of opioids in your system
- May need to try different amounts to get the right dose
- Stopping treatment should be monitored by medical staff
- Medications taken orally like Subutex or Suboxone must be taken every day
- Injectable medications like Sublocade and Probuphine can lose effectiveness after 28 days
- No generics currently exist for the injectable form of the medication which can make it expensive

Buprenorphine taken orally as Subutex or Suboxone are best for patients who are willing and able to take their medicine daily, as prescribed.

The injectable version of buprenorphine is best for patients with moderate to severe opioid use disorder who would benefit from receiving a steady dose of medication throughout the month without needing to take a daily pill.

Talk to your doctor about which medication is right for you and your lifestyle.

2 Methadone

Also called Methadose or Dolophine

Methadone usually comes as a liquid that you drink. It is a replacement for opioids like heroin and fentanyl. You must get methadone from an Opioid Treatment Program (OTP).

Pros

- Lowers overdose risk
- Has been used successfully for many years
- Successfully reduces opioid cravings and withdrawal symptoms by blocking the effects of opioids

Cons

- You must take your dose every day at a supervised clinic for at least the first few months
- You'll need to be especially careful about dosing and not mixing with other drugs.

Methadone is best for people who can go to a methadone clinic every day and for people who need something stronger than buprenorphine to help with cravings.

3 Naltrexone

Also called Depade, Rivia, or Vivitrol

Naltrexone works differently. This medicine helps prevent you from feeling the effects of opioids. You can get a monthly shot or a daily pill.

Pros

- If you get the shot, you only have to go to the doctor and take the medicine once a month
- Helps blocks the feelings and effects of opioids

Cons

- You have a higher chance of overdose (compared to buprenorphine or methadone) if you stop taking it
- Opioids must be out of your system before starting - this can take 7 to 14 days of not using

This medicine is best for people who have a less severe drug use history and have support from family, friends, or others to help them stay on the medicine.