

BUPRENORPHINE

Medication Guide



What is buprenorphine?

- Buprenorphine- also known as bup, Suboxone® or Subutex®- is a medicine for people who have chronic pain or addition to opioids (heroin, fentanyl, pain pills).
- It helps get rid of cravings and withdrawal, without making you feel high.
- People have less overdoses when they take buprenorphine.
- It is a safe medication that comes in many forms.
- Often buprenorphine and naloxone are taken together in one pill (Suboxone®). The naloxone is the same as Narcan® but if you take it under the tongue, it does not work in the body and does not make you have withdrawal like other ways to take it/get it. It is simply there so people don't crush the pill and inject it. If you do that, it does make you sick.

Is buprenorphine right for me?

- Paramedics or other providers will help make sure this is right for you.
- If you are currently taking methadone or have taken it recently, talk to your health care team first.
- Before taking the first dose of buprenorphine, most people need to feel some withdrawal. This is important because taking buprenorphine too early while other opioids at certain levels can make you very sick.
- Talk to your health care team (including paramedics) to see if buprenorphine is a good medicine for you. There are many good options for treatment of addiction and also to treat opioid withdrawal and only you and your team know what is best for you.

What is it like to take buprenorphine?

- Most people take buprenorphine once every day, letting it melt under your tongue. It's a simple routine that fits into your life, just like other daily medicines.
- Buprenorphine helps your brain feel steady. You don't feel high, but you also don't feel sick like you would in withdrawal. Most people feel more clear-headed. Rarely, people experience mild headache or nausea.
- The medicine reduces or stops cravings for opioids. That makes it easier to focus on your life, your health, and your goals — without constantly thinking about using.
- While on buprenorphine, you can work, drive, take care of family, and do normal things. It helps you feel stable, not sleepy or high.
- Some people take buprenorphine for months or even years. That's okay. It's like taking medicine for any other long-term condition — it helps you stay healthy and avoid relapse. If you want to stop, that is ok too, but talk to your health care team first.

Where can I follow up or start buprenorphine?

- We have a guide for you with local places to get started on buprenorphine. Sometimes the first visit isn't the right time to start, but your team will help you with that.
- You can pick up buprenorphine prescriptions written by a provider from a regular pharmacy, unlike methadone. There are also options to dose it at a clinic, like methadone.
- Some phone/video clinics as well as primary care doctors can help you start the medicine. There are also addiction medicine clinics and other options for you.