

# Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

## Medications for opioid use disorder save lives.

Each person has a personal path to recovery from opioid use disorder, and treatment with medication is a medical standard of care. It can help people begin their recovery, regain their lives and place in the community, and improve relationships with family and friends.

### Where can I find someone who can prescribe medications for opioid use disorder?

Step 1: If you have a health care provider (doctor, nurse, etc.), start there. Ask them about methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone, and whether you can be prescribed one of these medications. If your health care provider is unable or unwilling to prescribe these medications, request a referral to another provider who can prescribe them.

Step 2: If you do not have a health care provider, find a local treatment provider in your community by using the maps on our community pages.

### Why use medications for opioid use disorder?

People who stop using opioids often relapse (return to use) if they do not use medication to help them. Stopping and then restarting opioid use increases the chance of dying from an overdose.

Medications can help people be successful in their recovery by:

- Lowering the risk of relapse
- Lowering the risk of overdose death
- Increasing the time they stay in treatment
- Improving their lives and relationships with others

### What are the medications for opioid use disorder?

The three medications approved to treat opioid use disorder are:

#### Methadone

- Helps with withdrawal
- You drink it
- You have to go to a clinic daily for the first 90 days of treatment

#### Buprenorphine (Common brand names: Suboxone, Subutex)

- Helps with withdrawal
- You usually start by taking it daily as a tablet or film that dissolves under the tongue or in the cheek
- New rules now make it easier for health care providers to get a certificate (waiver) to prescribe buprenorphine, but not all clinics will offer it
- You typically get the prescription filled at a pharmacy
- In most cases, you can take it at home
- Once you have stabilized, your provider may recommend a long acting form of buprenorphine, such as Sublocade (injection).

**Naltrexone (Common brand name: Vivitrol)**

- You must stop opioid use 7 to 10 days before starting
- You might be prescribed other medications to help with withdrawal symptoms
- Usually given as a shot once a month

**Important Notes**

- These medications can save lives.
- If you stop taking a medication for opioid use disorder, it can increase the risk of overdose and death.
- You should discuss with a health care provider which one would work best for you.
- You should never stop taking medication without the guidance of a health care provider. Never stop taking them on your own.
- More information on medications for opioid use disorder can be found [here](#).