

Buprenorphine Patient Info Sheet

What is buprenorphine and how does it work?

Buprenorphine is a medication used to treat opioid use disorder. It is safe, effective, and saves lives.

Buprenorphine is an opioid that works by attaching to receptors in the brain to ease opioid withdrawal symptoms and opioid cravings. It also can prevent overdose by blocking the effects of other opioids.

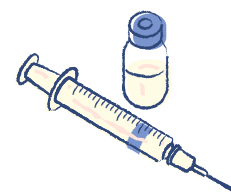
How do I take buprenorphine?

Buprenorphine is available in 2 formulations. Your healthcare team will work with you to determine the best form for you.

- **Transmucosal or sublingual buprenorphine strips, films, or tabs** are typically taken daily and dissolve under the tongue or inside of the cheek. The medication is absorbed through the mucous membranes in your mouth.



- **Extended-release injectable buprenorphine** is administered into the subcutaneous (fatty) tissue of your abdomen, outer thigh, buttock, or upper arm (depending on the product). It releases a steady level of medication and is administered once monthly or weekly. This medication is only handled and administered by your healthcare team.



What are the possible side effects of buprenorphine?

People taking buprenorphine may experience:

- Constipation
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Dental caries/oral health concerns
- Dry mouth
- Sweating
- Sexual dysfunction
- Urinary retention

If you are experiencing side effects, contact your healthcare team. Do not stop taking buprenorphine without consulting with your healthcare team.

What else should I know about buprenorphine?

It is important to tell your healthcare team if you are currently using any opioids (e.g., fentanyl, heroin, oxycodone, methadone, etc.) to avoid precipitated withdrawal when starting buprenorphine.

In addition to medications for opioid use disorder, counseling and mutual support groups are effective treatments to support recovery.

People may remain on treatment with buprenorphine indefinitely.