




GETTING STARTED ON BUPRENORPHINE: *High Dose Initiation Method* for New Patients

Patient Name _____ Provider Name _____ Date _____

The high dose initiation method involves discontinuing use of opioids and taking a high dose of buprenorphine on DAY 1 before dropping to a conventional dose starting on DAY 2. This method may be right for you if:

- You are unable or do not wish to start treatment at a methadone clinic
- You are not currently using methadone (high dose initiation is not recommended if you have recently taken methadone)
- Your circumstances require that you discontinue use of opioids immediately
- You are unable to follow the low dose initiation method
- You have tried and failed conventional initiation
- You believe this method would be most appropriate for your situation

 **After 24 hours have elapsed since your last opioid use**, and you are feeling severe withdrawal symptoms, follow the dosing method below.

DAY 1 DOSING METHOD FOR FENTANYL USERS

STEP 1

Take 16 mg of buprenorphine and wait 1 hour.

STEP 2

Take another 8 mg of buprenorphine and wait 1 hour.

STEP 3

If needed, take another 8mg of buprenorphine.

DO NOT REPEAT! The maximum total dose for day 1 is 32mg.

Earliest Buprenorphine Start Time

Start taking buprenorphine no earlier than (time) _____ on (day) _____

Additional Prescriptions (circle all that apply)

You have also been prescribed medication for overdose and withdrawal symptoms.

Medications for most patients:

Narcan (<i>naloxone</i>) in case of overdose (see instructions on last page)	Clonidine for restlessness, hot flashes, shakiness, tremor, sweating, goosebumps, runny nose, tearing	Vistaril (<i>hydroxyzine</i>) for anxiety	Zofran (<i>ondansetron</i>) for nausea	Neurontin (<i>gabapentin</i>) for restlessness, anxiety, sleep disturbance
---	---	--	---	---

Additional medications for some patients with targeted symptoms:

Bentyl (<i>dicyclomine</i>) for abdominal cramping	Advil/Motrin (<i>ibuprofen</i>) for muscles aches, joint pain, and headache	Remeron (<i>mirtazapine</i>) for insomnia
---	--	--

DAILY DOSE (DAY 2 AND ONWARD)

Daily Dose: Take _____ mg once daily

This is the maintenance dose that you will take every day while receiving medication assisted treatment at Ideal Option.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Prescription Pick-Up

Your prescription should be filled within 6 hours at your selected pharmacy. If your prescription is not ready for pick-up within 6 hours, please call 1-877-522-1275 (press option #1, then #3).

Next Visit

You should plan to return to Ideal Option (check one):

Twice Per Week Once Per Week

Please schedule your next visit for (date): _____

Nurse Care Manager

Your Nurse Care Manager will check in with you regularly to answer questions about dosing and/or withdrawal symptoms. You can reach out to a nurse at any time by calling 1-877-522-1275 (press #1, then #6).

WHAT IS BUPRENORPHINE?

Buprenorphine (Suboxone[®], Subutex[®], Zubsolv[®]) is a safe and effective medication that will help you stop using opioids like fentanyl, heroin, and pain pills.

The first phase of treatment with buprenorphine is called “initiation” and can last up to 7 days or more. When doing initiation at home, it’s important to get the timing and dose of buprenorphine right, so you don’t enter **precipitated withdrawal**.

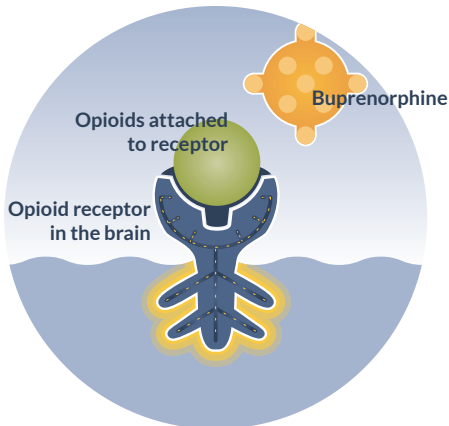


WHAT IS PRECIPITATED WITHDRAWAL?

Precipitated Withdrawal is an extreme form of withdrawal that can happen quickly if you take too much buprenorphine too soon. It results in severe pain and symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, vomiting, and diarrhea. Here's how it can happen:

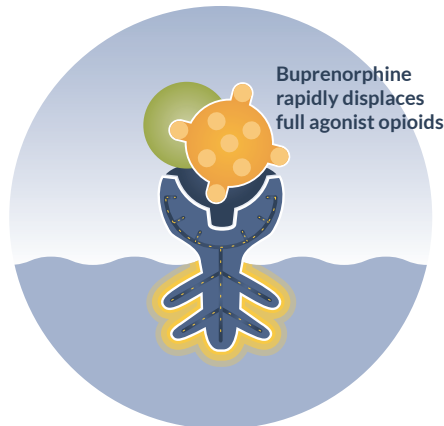
HIGH AFFINITY

Buprenorphine binds tightly to the receptor, displacing other opioids.



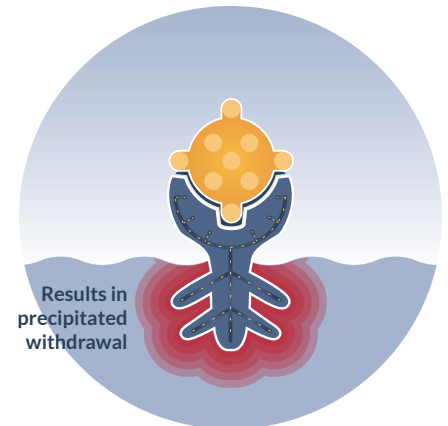
PARTIAL AGONIST

Buprenorphine produces significantly less effect than a full agonist opioid.



NET OPIOID DEFICIT






Suddenly replacing a full agonist opioid with a partial agonist opioid leads to intense withdrawal.



HOW TO TAKE BUPRENORPHINE


BEFORE


For **30 MINUTES BEFORE** dosing, **DO NOT:**

-  Brush your teeth
-  Drink coffee
-  Drink cloudy liquids like milk or coffee creamer
-  Eat yogurt
-  Use tobacco or vaping products


These may reduce or block absorption of your medication.


DOSING


 Drink a few sips of warm water before taking your medication.

 Place film strip or tablet **UNDER** your tongue and let it dissolve completely.

 When completely dissolved, set your timer for **15-20 minutes**.

 **DO NOT** spit, swallow, eat, smoke, vape, or drink during this time.

 After 15-20 minutes, spit out any remaining saliva. Then, take a large sip of water and swish it around your teeth and gums. After rinsing, spit out the water; do not swallow it.

 Repeat the steps above for each film strip or tablet.


AFTER

For **30 MINUTES AFTER** dosing, **DO NOT:**

-  Drink any liquids
-  Eat any foods
-  Use tobacco or vaping products

These may reduce or block absorption of your medication.

1 HOUR AFTER dosing, **DO:**

-  Brush your teeth to remove any traces of the medication.

REMINDERS

- **Don't combine opioids with other substances.** The use of opioids, including buprenorphine, with alcohol or sedatives such as benzodiazepines (Xanax, Ativan, Valium), nerve pain medications (Lyrica, Gabapentin), and prescription sleep medications (Ambien, Lunesta) may increase the risk of respiratory depression, which can be fatal.
- **Avoid other opioids.** When using the high dose initiation method, any other medication or substances that contain opioids should be avoided, unless approved by your provider.
- **Check before starting new medications.** Speak with your provider before starting any new medication while taking buprenorphine.
- **Safe storage is critical.** Store your prescriptions away from other people, especially children, preferably in a secure location such as a lockbox or safe. We cannot replace lost or stolen medication.
- **Use Narcan or Kloxxado in the event of an overdose.** First, call 911. Then, gently insert the tip of the nozzle into one nostril until your fingers on either side of the nozzle are against the bottom of the person's nose. Press the plunger firmly to give the dose of the nasal spray. Remove the nasal spray from the nostril after giving the dose. Repeat every 2-3 minutes until the person responds.
- **Protect your teeth.** Buprenorphine may cause tooth decay. After the medicine has been under the tongue for 15-20 minutes and is completely dissolved, spit out any remaining saliva. Then, take a large sip of water and swish it around your teeth and gums. After rinsing, spit out the water; do not swallow it. Wait one hour before brushing your teeth.
- **Community resources.** Ask the front desk for information on recovery support services in your local community.

