



PATIENT INFORMATION – **Vivitrol[®]** Injections

WHAT IS VIVITROL[®]?

Vivitrol is the **long-acting injectable** form of naltrexone, a medication that binds to and blocks certain receptors in the brain that are responsible for some of the rewarding and reinforcing effects of drugs and alcohol. Vivitrol is administered as a **monthly injection into the buttock** and replaces the need for daily dosing of oral naltrexone.

What are the Benefits of Receiving Vivitrol?

For opioid use disorder (OUD):

- Vivitrol blocks some of the effects of opioids, making **relapse and fatal overdose less likely**
- Vivitrol may **reduce cravings for opioids**
- Unlike buprenorphine (Suboxone) and methadone, Vivitrol **does not cause dependence or withdrawal** when stopped

For alcohol use disorder:

- Vivitrol **reduces the pleasurable effects of alcohol** and has been shown to decrease daily alcohol intake
- Vivitrol may **reduce cravings for alcohol** and may reduce the risk of relapse

What are the Risks of Receiving Vivitrol Injections?

- If you have used opioids (including buprenorphine and methadone) or medications containing opioids in the 2 weeks prior to starting Vivitrol, it can cause sudden opioid withdrawal symptoms.
- **Do not use opioids** while receiving Vivitrol. Large doses of opioids can still result in overdose.
- Generally, Vivitrol should be **avoided during pregnancy**, as it's unknown whether it will harm an unborn baby. Although, the benefits of taking Vivitrol may outweigh the possible risks.
- Vivitrol cannot be immediately discontinued and **may block the effect of opioid pain-relieving medications**, which could complicate management of acute pain.
- Your body will be **more sensitive to opioids** after discontinuing Vivitrol. Using the same amount that you used previously could lead to overdose or death.
- Vivitrol is generally well-tolerated, though side effects may include **nausea, headache, and symptoms of depression**.
- In rare cases, Vivitrol can harm your liver. You should receive periodic blood tests to **check your liver function**.

How is Vivitrol Administered?

Injected into the buttock, usually every 4 weeks, for the duration of treatment. You'll get the most benefit from the injection if you receive it regularly.



Nurse Care Team

If you have a reaction or a side effect you believe may be due to Vivitrol, you can reach out to a nurse **at any time** (available 24/7) by calling 1-877-522-1275 (press #1, then #6).

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

We recommend that you call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department for any of the following symptoms while receiving Vivitrol injections.

- Opioid withdrawal symptoms like shivering, goose bumps, increased sweating, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Severe pain, redness, or bruising or signs of infection where the medicine was injected
- Indications of liver problems like stomach pain, dark urine, or jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- Worsening depression

REMINDERS

- **Check before starting new medications.** Speak with your provider before starting any new medication while receiving Vivitrol.
- **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.
- If you are taking Vivitrol for OUD, your **opioid tolerance will decrease over time**. If you discontinue Vivitrol and return to opioid use, you are at higher risk for overdose and death.