



Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) — Buprenorphine

At Ambetter from Arkansas Health & Wellness, we are committed to working with providers like you to find the best care for our members. For patients struggling with opioid use disorder (OUD), buprenorphine may help.

What Is Buprenorphine?

Buprenorphine is an opioid partial agonist medication prescribed to treat OUD. Buprenorphine is prescribed to treat OUD, and is the only opioid partial agonist medication to treat OUD that can be prescribed from a physician's office.

Buprenorphine is one of three FDA-approved medications available to treat OUD. Buprenorphine binds to the opioid receptor and reduces opioid withdrawal symptoms, eliminates cravings and prevents other opioids from binding to the receptor.

Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000) Waiver¹

Buprenorphine is a schedule III medication that may be prescribed only by certified physicians, as well as advanced practice providers, through the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000) and Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016 & 2018.

The following buprenorphine products are FDA-approved for the treatment of OUD:²

- Generic buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual tablets
- Buprenorphine sublingual tablets (Subutex/generic monoprodukt)
- Buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual films (Suboxone/generic produkt)
- Buprenorphine/naloxone sublingual tablets (Zubsolv)
- Buprenorphine/naloxone buccal film (Bunavail)
- Buprenorphine implants (Probuphine)
- Buprenorphine extended-release injection (Sublocade)

Induction and dosing^{3, 4}

Induction — Beginning with the induction (initiation) phase, a qualified prescriber gives instructions on taking an approved buprenorphine preparation to a person with an opioid use disorder. It requires that the patient has not used opioids for 12–24 hours and is experiencing mild to moderate withdrawal.

Monitoring — Buprenorphine doses may need to be adjusted over the time that a patient greatly reduces or ideally discontinues use of other opioids. Adjustments generally are made based on continued symptoms of cravings, continued use or adverse effects.

Precautions — Buprenorphine is an opioid, and has side effects including constipation, sedation and dependence, and it can be misused.

Recommendations — Review all medications a patient is taking. Patients should be reminded to avoid alcohol, sedating medications or substances, and illegal drugs when taking buprenorphine. Prescribers should monitor liver enzymes and function depending on comorbidities. It is recommended to co-prescribe naloxone when a patient is identified as having opioid use disorder.

Side effects⁵

- Nausea, vomiting, and constipation
- Muscle aches and cramps
- Cravings
- Insomnia
- Distress and irritability
- Fever/Sweating

Apply for a Practitioner Waiver

To receive a waiver to prescribe buprenorphine under DATA 2000,

- 1 Attend training — see SAMHSA’s website for training options.⁶
 - a. Eight hours for physicians.
 - b. Additional 16 hours (24 hours total) required for the following advanced practice clinicians: nurse practitioners (NP), physician assistants (PA), clinical nurse specialist (CNS), certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) and clinical nurse-midwife (CNM).⁷
- 2 Apply for waiver — see SAMHSA’s website for application instructions.⁸
- 3 Find a mentor — see PCSS website for details.⁹
- 4 Apply to increase patient limits, when you are ready.
- 5 Once the prescriber attains a waiver, there are limits on the number of patients the prescriber can offer buprenorphine to. Patient limits:
 - Year 1 of certification: 30 patients
 - Year 2 of certification: 100 patients
 - Year 3 of certification: 275 patients
- 6 SAMHSA must be notified when the prescriber wants to increase the limit and this is easily done on their website. See SAMHSA website for details.¹⁰

Resources

SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)

For information on buprenorphine treatment, contact the SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) at 866-BUP-CSAT (866-287-2728) or infobuprenorphine@samhsa.hhs.gov

SAMHSA National Helpline

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Mentor support

- SAMHSA State Targeted Response Technical Assistance (STR-TA), known as the Opioid Response Network: <https://www.samhsa.gov/state-targeted-response-technical-assistance>
- Provider Clinical Support System (PCSS) Mentoring: <https://pcssnow.org/mentoring/>
- University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Clinical Consultation Center (CCC): Substance Use Warmline at (855) 300-3595 or <https://nccc.ucsf.edu/clinical-resources/substance-use-resources/>

Training^{11, 12}

- Where to get training: <https://pcssnow.org/medication-assisted-treatment/>
- Where to apply: <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/become-buprenorphine-waivered-practitioner>

For More Information:

NIDA: Medications to Treat Opioid Use Disorder

<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/overview>

Additional Support

We’re here to help with additional tools and local resources. Please contact us by calling **1-877-617-0390 (TTY: 1-877-617-0392)** or visiting **[Ambetter.ARHealthWellness.com](https://www.ambetter.com)**.

Sources:

- 1 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/become-buprenorphine-waivered-practitioner>
- 2 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/treatment/buprenorphine>
- 3 CSAT’s KAP (Knowledge Application Program) Keys for Clinicians Based on TIP 43: Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction in Opioid Treatment Programs <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma12-4108.pdf>
- 4 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/treatment/buprenorphine>
- 5 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/treatment/buprenorphine>
- 6 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/become-buprenorphine-waivered-practitioner>
- 7 <https://pcssnow.org/medication-assisted-treatment/>
- 8 <http://buprenorphine.samhsa.gov/pls/bwns/waiver>
- 9 <https://pcssnow.org/mentoring/>
- 10 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/become-buprenorphine-waivered-practitioner>
- 11 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/become-buprenorphine-waivered-practitioner>
- 12 <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/become-buprenorphine-waivered-practitioner>