### About OUD

**What is opioid use disorder?**

Opioid use disorder (OUD) is a long term medical condition. People with the condition are physically dependent on opioids and have brain changes that affect their thinking, priorities, and relationships. OUD can come back if not treated properly. You may need to try more than one type of treatment to find what works best for you.

**What can medications do for me?**

Medications are proven to work the best at treating opioid use disorder.

**They help:**

- Manage craving and withdrawal.
- Reduce illicit opioid use.
- Decrease the risk of having an overdose.

Medications can provide stability, allowing people to address other things in their lives.

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### What's next?

Learn more about OUD and how to use this brochure: [learnabouttreatment.org](http://learnabouttreatment.org)

Connect to medication options near you: [warecoveryhelpline.org](http://warecoveryhelpline.org)

Find naloxone and overdose info: [stopoverdose.org](http://stopoverdose.org)

More info on medications: [samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment](http://samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment)

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### Your preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dosing frequency:</td>
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<td>Clinic visit frequency:</td>
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<td>Counseling:</td>
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<td>Support group:</td>
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<td>Medication options:</td>
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Other:  

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Call the **Washington Recovery Help Line** to talk about your options for medications, counseling and support groups, and connect to care.

**Washington Recovery Help Line**  
24-Hour Help for Substance Abuse, Problem Gambling & Mental Health  
1.866.789.1511  
[warecoveryhelpline.org](http://warecoveryhelpline.org)

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**Medications for Opioid Use Disorder**

You can be in recovery and be on medications at the same time.
## Treatment options

There are three places where you can get medications for opioid use disorder:

### Opioid treatment program (OTP)
- Methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone available.
- Highly structured—counseling and supervised dosing may be required.

### Medical office/Primary care
- Buprenorphine or naltrexone available.
- Familiar medical office setting.
- Less structure (often weekly or monthly visits, some don’t require counseling).
- Appointment often needed.

### Community program
- Buprenorphine or naltrexone available.
- Other services may be offered (syringe exchange, housing supports, etc.).
- May have drop-in visits.

### How does this medication work?

**Methadone**
- Methadone is a full opioid medication.
- The more you take the more you will feel its effects.
- Manages cravings and withdrawal by binding to opioid receptors.

**Buprenorphine**
- Buprenorphine is a partial opioid medication.
- Has a ceiling effect, so above a certain dose you stop feeling more of its effects.
- Manages cravings and withdrawal by binding to opioid receptors.

**Naltrexone**
- Naltrexone is an opioid blocker.
- It is not an opioid, so you won’t feel an opioid effect.
- Helps manage cravings for some people.

### Does it lower my risk of dying?  Based on research that tracked outcomes in the real world.

**Methadone**
- Lowers risk of death by about 50%.

**Buprenorphine**
- Lowers risk of death by about 50%.

**Naltrexone**
- Has not been shown to lower the risk of death.

### How long does it last, and how do I take it?

**Methadone**
- Lasts about 24 hours and is taken by mouth.

**Buprenorphine**
- Oral form lasts about 24 hours, injectable form lasts about 28 days.

**Naltrexone**
- An injection that lasts for 28 days. You can’t use any opioids for 7-10 days before taking naltrexone.

### Where can I get it, and how often do I need to go?

**Methadone**
- Dispensed only at opioid treatment programs.
- Dosing can start up to 6 days a week, but usually becomes less often over time during treatment.

**Buprenorphine**
- Prescribed by a medical provider and picked up at a pharmacy (oral) or given at an appointment (injection). Both are available at some opioid treatment programs.
- Visits vary from near daily to monthly.

**Naltrexone**
- Prescribed and given by a medical provider, or provided at an opioid treatment program.
- Visits vary from weekly to monthly.

### Will I need to go to counseling?

**Methadone**
- Requires regular urine drug testing and counseling.

**Buprenorphine**
- Most providers require urine drug testing and some require counseling.

**Naltrexone**
- Some providers require urine drug testing and counseling.