

# Overview of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for Opioid Use Disorder



## What is MAT?

MAT combines behavioral therapy and medications to treat substance use disorders. MAT should always be used in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies after medical detoxification to increase the rate of abstinence from opioids. Medical detox alone is rarely sufficient to help achieve long-term abstinence.

## What are the benefits of MAT?

MAT can:

- improve patients' chances of survival
- increase retention in treatment
- decrease illicit opioid use
- increase a patient's ability to gain and maintain employment
- improve birth outcomes among pregnant women with substance use disorders

## Where can MAT be provided?

	Methadone	Buprenorphine
Allowable practitioner actions	Administer and dispense*	Prescribe and dispense
Clinic types	Opioid treatment programs (OTPs) only	Doctor's office, community health center, or OTP

Any prescriber can offer naltrexone.

\*A patient taking methadone should receive the medication under practitioner supervision. If treatment is successful, the provider can determine if the patient can take methadone at home between program visits.

## What are MAT drugs for opioid use disorder?

Drug	Common Dose	Common Side Effects	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Methadone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20–120 mg daily (pills, liquid, wafer form)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypotension</li> <li>• Sweating</li> <li>• Constipation</li> <li>• Sedation</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will not block the effects of other opioids</li> <li>• Effective as long as adhered to</li> <li>• Slows brain uptake and reduces feeling of euphoria</li> <li>• Only MAT drug approved for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to visit the clinic daily since it is only dispensed at approved treatment centers</li> </ul>

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Drug	Common Dose	Common Side Effects	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Buprenorphine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SL Tablet: 4–32 mg daily</li> <li>• Implant: 4 single-rod (each has 74.2mg) every 6 months</li> <li>• Injection: 100–300 mg monthly</li> <li>• SL film, Buprenorphine 4–32mg/naloxone daily</li> <li>• Buccal film, Buprenorphine 2.1-12.6 mg/naloxone daily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application site reaction</li> <li>• Constipation</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Sedation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be prescribed and filled at patient’s preferred pharmacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buprenorphine-only products can have abuse potential, so prescribe it in combination with naloxone</li> </ul>
<b>Naltrexone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 mg by mouth daily</li> <li>• 380 mg intramuscularly once monthly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abdominal pain</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Lack of energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not addictive or sedating</li> <li>• Comes as a monthly injection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor patient compliance</li> <li>• Avoid in pregnant patients or ones wanting to get pregnant</li> <li>• Must be abstinent for 7–10 days before starting</li> </ul>

**Please note:** Due to differences in the bioavailability of buprenorphine buccal compared to buprenorphine sublingual tablets or film, different strengths must be given to achieve equivalent doses.

**Notable limitations:** Members with active cancer or sickle cell disease or in end-of-life care or hospice are not included in MAT initiatives.

## Additional resources

Individuals can find nearby treatment centers at [FindTreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov).

They may also call SAMHSA’s National Helpline at **800-662-4357** for confidential treatment referrals and information about mental health or substance use disorders. The helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

## References

1. [SAMHSA.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders](https://www.samhsa.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders)
2. [Oregon.gov/oha/hsd/amh/pages/mat.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/hsd/amh/pages/mat.aspx)
3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). TIP 63: Medications for Opioid Use Disorder.
4. NIDA. 2021, December 3. How effective are medications to treat opioid use disorder? Retrieved from <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/efficacy-medications-opioid-use-disorder> on 2024, March 5.

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