



For support with problem drug use
and for other resources,
talk to your doctor or **call 311**.

For more information, visit
<https://dbhids.org/MAT> or
call **888-545-2600**.

Materials adapted with permission from the
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BUPE

Do you have a problem
with prescription
painkillers or heroin?

**BUPRENORPHINE
can help.**



WHAT IS BUPRENORPHINE?

Buprenorphine (or “bupe”) is a medication that treats addiction to opioids, such as prescription painkillers (like Vicodin, Oxycontin or Percocet) and heroin. Suboxone is a common brand name for bupe.



HOW DOES BUPE WORK?

Bupe stops withdrawal symptoms and cravings. This makes it easier for you to stop using or cut down, so you can focus on activities that are important to you.



CAN BUPE CAUSE OVERDOSE?

It’s hard to overdose on bupe by taking too much. However, it is dangerous to mix bupe with alcohol, benzodiazepines (or “benzos”, like Valium, Xanax or Ativan), or other sedating drugs. Mixing bupe with these drugs increases your risk of overdose.



DOES BUPE HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects are different for different people. They are usually mild and may include constipation, nausea, headache and insomnia.



HOW LONG DO I NEED TO TAKE BUPE?

Everybody is different. Many people may benefit from long-term treatment; other people may need bupe for a shorter time.



CAN I SWITCH FROM METHADONE TO BUPE?

Yes, but talk to your doctor first to make sure you are on the right methadone dose before switching.



WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE PAY FOR BUPE?

Yes. Medicaid, Medicare and most other health plans pay for bupe. Check with your health plan to make sure bupe is on the list of approved drugs.



HOW DO I GET BUPE?

Ask your doctor to prescribe bupe. Once you have a prescription, you can get bupe at a pharmacy and take it at home, just like other medications.

If your doctor does not prescribe bupe, call 311, or go to samhsa.gov and search for “buprenorphine” to find other options for getting bupe.



WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT STARTING BUPE?

- Your doctor will explain that you must be in some withdrawal from opioids when starting bupe.
 - You should tell your doctor about any medications you are taking, since some can interact with bupe.
 - You should tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
 - Taking bupe is sometimes enough to help, but many people also benefit from counseling. Your doctor can help you decide whether counseling is right for you.
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