

Youth and Family Guide to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)

1. What is MAT and what does it do?

- Just as physical ailments have prescription medication to assist in recovery (ie. Diabetes, heart disease, arthritis), opioid addiction can be treated with medication, as well.
- MAT can be used to treat withdrawal symptoms and to reduce intense cravings. It also has been found to reduce the risk of relapse.¹
- Along with monitoring and a controlled level of medications, concurrent counseling and support from family and friends is important to long-term recovery.¹

2. What are different types of medications for MAT?

- Methadone prevents withdrawal symptoms and helps to reduce cravings. Methadone is dispensed only through a certified opioid treatment program (OTP) and is taken daily.¹
- Buprenorphine, commonly prescribed with Naloxone (*Suboxone*®), prevents withdrawal symptoms and reduces cravings, while limiting the effects of other opioid drugs. It is prescribed by a physician in an office-based setting or opioid treatment program and is taken daily.¹
- Naltrexone (*Vivitrol*®) prevents drugs and alcohol from producing a 'high' or intoxicated state. It is available in pill form but is usually administered through injection monthly by a physician.¹

3. Common myths about MAT

- MAT trades one addiction for another² (*False*)
Truth: When used according to the doctor's instructions, the medication will not create a new addiction¹
 - Research indicates that a combination of medication and behavioral therapies can successfully treat substance use disorders and help sustain recovery²
 - MAT links the biological and behavioral components of addiction²
- MAT increases the risk for overdose² (*False*)
Truth: MAT helps to prevent overdoses from occurring²
 - After detox, while cravings may remain high, people are at increased risk of overdose if they use opiates because the body's tolerance level has lowered²
- MAT is only for short-term use² (*False*)
Truth: Research indicates that people who remain on MAT for at least 1-2 years have the highest rates of long-term recovery success²
 - There is no evidence supporting benefits in discontinuing MAT.² However, when discontinuing methadone or buprenorphine (*Suboxone*®), the dose should be tapered ONLY under the care of the prescribing physician.¹
- MAT will only disrupt a patient's recovery process² (*False*)
Truth: MAT is shown to help people in recovery by improving quality of life, level of functioning, and the ability to handle triggers and stressful situations²
 - MAT reduces fatalities while people begin and advance in recovery²
- There isn't any evidence that MAT is better than abstinence² (*False*)
Truth: There is a significant amount of research to support the effectiveness of MAT^{2,3}

- MAT is a highly recommended form of treatment for opioid addiction supported by credible medical and addiction-related associations and agencies^{1,2}

4. Is MAT safe for youth?

- Research and clinical experience have not identified any age-specific safety concerns³
- Research on MAT, specifically buprenorphine (*Suboxone*®), found that adolescents 15 years of age and older on MAT were less likely to continue opioid use³
- Adolescents that were compliant in taking buprenorphine (*Suboxone*®) were more likely to be engaged in counseling³
- It is critical for youth to receive appropriate medical supervision and monitoring while engaged in MAT. Parents and caregivers have an important role in keeping medication in a safe place and ensuring that the medication is taken as prescribed.^{1,3}
- Although there is research to support MAT for youth, research is ongoing, and all treatment options should be considered.

Resources

Where do I find Medication-Assisted Treatment? First step is to consult with your doctor to find the best approach and education for your child or young adult. Review the following three directories to obtain a list in your area of locations and phone numbers:

THE OPIOID TREATMENT PROGRAM DIRECTORY Find opioid treatment programs in your state:
<http://dpt2.samhsa.gov/treatment/directory.aspx>

SUBOXONE DOCTOR LOCATOR Find a certified doctor near you who can prescribe a private, in-office treatment for addiction:
http://www.suboxone.com/patients/opioid_dependence/find_a_doctor.aspx

FIND A NALTREXONE/VIVITROL DOCTOR Find a certified doctor near you who can talk with you about Vivitrol (naltrexone for extended-release injectable suspension):
<https://www.vivitrol.com/find-a-treatment-provider>

Using Methadone Safely
http://www.atforum.com/documents/english/Using_Methadone_Safely.pdf

The Facts About Buprenorphine
<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4442.pdf>

The Facts About Naltrexone
<http://atforum.com/documents/Naltrexone.pdf>

Parents Helping Parents
Visit www.drugfree.org for online support and information or call the toll-free helpline 1-855-DRUGFREE (1-855-378-4373) to speak to a Parent Specialist

References

1. Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. (2017). Medication-Assisted Treatment: An eBook for Parents and Caregivers of Teens and Young Adults Addicted to Opioids.
2. NJ Reentry Corporation. (2018). Reentry: New Jersey Opioid Addiction Report: A Modern Plague.
3. Committee on Substance Use and Prevention. (2016). Medication-assisted treatment of adolescents with opioid use disorders. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 3(138), 1-4.