



PRESCRIBE WITH CONFIDENCE



Patients with Opioid Use Disorder Need You

MORE THAN AN ESTIMATED 6 MILLION PEOPLE AGED 12 OR OLDER HAVE OPIOID USE DISORDER^[1]

Many primary care providers likely already provide medical care to people who also have opioid use disorder (OUD). There are a lot of people with OUD who need or want treatment but have not yet received any.^[2] That includes some people who do not have access to specialty care for this purpose. There are many different resources for primary care providers to find screening tools that will help them identify people who are at risk for OUD.

OPIOID USE DISORDER IS A TREATABLE CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION^[3]

There is abundant evidence that treatment for OUD is most effective when medications are used.^[4] Treatment of OUD with medication reduces opioid misuse and the risks of overdose, return-to-use, and death compared with those receiving no treatment.^[5] These medications are an important tool to help people in need.

PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS CAN PRESCRIBE MEDICATIONS TO TREAT OPIOID USE DISORDER

Types of medications used to treat opioid use disorder and who can prescribe them

The FDA has approved three medications for treatment of OUD: buprenorphine, naltrexone, and methadone.

The most commonly prescribed medications used to treat OUD in outpatient primary care settings are **buprenorphine-containing products**, which are available in a film or tablet for sublingual or buccal use. There are also long-acting injectable forms of buprenorphine.

Physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners who have a current Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration with authority to prescribe controlled substances can [prescribe buprenorphine for OUD](#), though some states may have additional requirements to do so. New or renewing DEA registrants must meet [DEA requirements](#) to continue prescribing.

A DATA waiver (X-waiver), long considered a barrier preventing health care providers from prescribing buprenorphine, [is no longer required](#). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has more information about [waiver elimination](#).

Injectable naltrexone can also be prescribed by any provider with the authority to prescribe medication.^[6]

Methadone used to treat OUD can only be dispensed by opioid treatment programs (OTPs), except in very limited circumstances.

People with opioid use disorder should be informed of the risks of these medications and the risks of no treatment. Prescribing information for all medications used to treat OUD can be found at [Drugs@FDA](#).

WHY DO MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER BELONG IN PRIMARY CARE

As a primary care prescriber treating other chronic health conditions, you are in a key position to also prescribe medications for OUD. You can do this the same way you practice shared decision-making to help patients manage asthma, diabetes, or hypertension. Providers in a variety of primary care settings should work together with their patients to manage care for OUD.

WHAT YOU SAY MATTERS

People with OUD often experience the negative consequences of inaccurate assumptions about who they are, which is known as stigma^[7]. Stigmatizing assumptions may:

- Lower someone's willingness to seek treatment.
- Cause feelings of isolation as stereotypes lead other people to feel pity, fear, anger, or a need to keep away from someone who has OUD.
- Negatively influence health care providers' perceptions of people with OUD and impact the care they receive.

The words you choose play a powerful role in how someone perceives your willingness to help them and your perceptions of them. Health care professionals who provide OUD treatment can improve patient experiences and combat stigma by using person-centered, strengths-based language. In other words, choose language that focuses on a person's unique characteristics rather than on their health condition or disease.

^[1]Among people aged 12 or older in 2022, 2.2 percent (or 6.1 million people) had an opioid use disorder in the past year.

Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). 2023. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/results-2022-national-survey-drug-use-and-health-nsduh-key-substance-use-and-mental-health>

^[2]Jones CM, Han B, Baldwin GT. Use of Medication for Opioid Use Disorder Among Adults With Past-Year Opioid Use Disorder in the US, 2021. Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacology. JAMA Network Open. 2023. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2807964>

^[3]Treatment of Substance Use Disorders. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/treatment/index.html>

^[4]Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Save Lives, Consensus Study Report. National Academies for Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAEM). 2019. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/25310/medications-for-opioid-use-disorder-save-lives>

White House National Drug Control Strategy 2022. Office of National Drug Control Policy, Executive Office of the President. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/National-Drug-Control-2022Strategy.pdf>

Overdose Prevention and Response Toolkit. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2024. <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/overdose-prevention-response-toolkit-pep23-03-00-001.pdf>.

Medications for Opioid Use Disorder: Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 63. SAMHSA. 2021. <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/tip-63-medications-opioid-use-disorder/pep21-02-01-002>

How effective are medications to treat opioid use disorder? National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/medications-to-treat-opioid-addiction/efficacy-medications-opioid-use-disorder>

^[5]Medications for Opioid Use Disorder: Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 63, SAMHSA. 2021. <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep21-02-01-002.pdf>.

^[6]National Practice Guidelines Pocket Guide. American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/ebp/asam-national-practice-guideline-treatment-opioid-use-disorder-pocket-guide>

^[7]Judd H, Yaughner AC, O'Shay S, Meier CL. Understanding stigma through the lived experiences of people with opioid use disorder. Drug and Alcohol Dependence. 2023. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37390780/>



Get more information and find resources for free training, mentoring, and other details so you can start diagnosing opioid use disorder and prescribing medications used to treat this disorder today.

www.fda.gov/prescribewithconfidence

MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER SAVE LIVES^[4]