



What is Suboxone®?

Suboxone® (buprenorphine/naloxone) is a prescribed medicine that helps people stop using opioids like pain pills, fentanyl or heroin. It helps by:

- Reducing cravings (the strong urge to use)
- Easing withdrawal symptoms (feeling sick when you stop using)

Suboxone® works best when you also talk to a counselor or go to therapy. You should see your healthcare provider or visit a substance use disorder clinic within 2 to 3 days after starting this medicine.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TAKE SUBOXONE® SAFELY?

Suboxone® can make you very sleepy or dangerously slow your breathing if you take it with alcohol or certain other drugs or medications.

- Always take it just the way your healthcare provider tells you.
- Never mix it with other medicines unless your healthcare provider says it is okay.

Common withdrawal symptoms

- High blood pressure, fast heartbeat
- Irritability or agitation
- Dilated pupils, sweating, chills or goosebumps
- Runny nose or watery eyes
- Stomach cramps, nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Tremor/shaking, muscle aches or joint pain
- Restlessness or anxiety
- Yawning a lot or trouble sleeping
- Sensitive to touch
- Strong desire to use drugs

How do I know I am ready to start Suboxone®?

YOU SHOULD FEEL SICK FROM WITHDRAWAL AND HAVE AT LEAST 3 OF THESE SYMPTOMS:

- Restlessness
- Yawning a lot
- Large pupils
- Runny nose
- Body aches
- Tremors or twitching
- Chills or sweating
- Feeling anxious or irritable
- Stomach issues (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)

MAKE SURE IT HAS BEEN AT LEAST:

- 12 hours since you last used heroin, fentanyl, or snorted pain pills
- 16 hours since you last swallowed pain pills
- 48 to 72 hours since you used methadone

The worse you feel before taking Suboxone®, the better it will work.

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WHEN SHOULD I TAKE SUBOXONE®?

You may have been started on Suboxone® in the emergency room or are planning to start it at home.

- Follow your healthcare provider's instructions for how much to take each day.
- They may also tell you how to take an extra dose if your withdrawal symptoms get worse.
- If you have questions, call your healthcare provider.

Don't take Suboxone® too soon after using opioids—it can make you feel worse.

Step-by-Step instructions for taking Suboxone®:

Day One

Step 1:

Check the **strength** of your strip.

- If it says 4mg/1mg, use the whole strip.
- If it says 8mg/2mg, cut it in half.

Take a **sip of water** first to moisten your mouth.

Put the **strip under your tongue** and let it melt.



- Don't chew or swallow it.
- It takes about 5 to 15 minutes to dissolve.

Don't eat or drink for 30 minutes before and after taking it.

Don't brush your teeth for 1 hour after taking it. This helps protect your teeth.

Tip: If you take your dose in the morning, brush your teeth first, then take your medicine. You can eat breakfast 30 minutes later or take something with you to eat at school/work.

DO NOT TAKE ANY MORE IF YOU ARE FEELING BETTER. THIS MEANS THE MEDICATION IS WORKING.

If you still feel sick, follow **Step 2:**

Step 2:

- Wait 1 to 2 hours after your first dose
 - Take the additional 4 mg buprenorphine/ 1mg naloxone strip
 - Put it under your tongue and let it melt
- Wait 6 to 12 hours

DO NOT TAKE ANY MORE IF YOU ARE FEELING BETTER.

THIS MEANS THE ADDITIONAL MEDICATION IS WORKING.

If you still feel sick, follow **Step 3:**

Step 3:

- Wait 6 to 12 hours after your second dose
 - Take an additional 4 mg buprenorphine/ 1 mg naloxone strip
 - Put it under your tongue and let it melt

STOP AFTER THIS DOSE.

DO NOT TAKE MORE THAN 12 MG OF BUPRENORPHINE ON THE FIRST DAY.

If you need more than 12mg to control your symptoms, please call your healthcare provider or go to the emergency department.

DAY TWO

- If you felt better after taking one strip (4mg/1mg), keep taking that same amount once a day.
- If you needed two or three strips (8mg/2mg or 12mg/3mg) to feel better, take that amount once a day.

Keep taking the same dose each day until your healthcare provider tells you to change. They will also refer you to counseling or therapy.



Track your dose

Below is a place where you can track your daily dose to share with your healthcare provider.

| Daily Dose Tracking | |
|---------------------|--|
| DAY ONE | |
| DAY TWO | |
| DAY THREE | |

DO NOT STOP SUDDENLY.

Stopping Suboxone® suddenly can make you sick. Talk with your healthcare provider first.

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Call 911 or get help right away if you:

- Have severe stomach pain, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Have slow or difficult breathing
- Feel confused or cannot think clearly

What if I miss a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed one. Do not take two doses at once.

Safety tips

- Keep Suboxone® out of reach of children and in a location not accessible by others, including visitors to the home.
- Do not share your medicine with anyone.
- Avoid alcohol and other drugs or medications unless your health care provider says it is okay.
- Tell your healthcare provider about all medicines you take and if you are living in a household with small children.

If a child takes Suboxone® by accident, it is very dangerous and could cause death. Call 911 or get emergency help right away.

If the child shows signs of overdose, use naloxone as explained in your Naloxone handout.

Common side effects and what to do

| Side effect | What to do |
|---|---|
| Constipation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink more water and juice• Eat food with fiber• Exercise more• Check with your doctor about over-the-counter medicines you may take |
| Headache, body aches, and cold- or flu-like symptoms | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check with your doctor about over-the-counter medicines you may take |
| Upset stomach or vomiting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take an antacid product or anti-nausea medicine as prescribed by your doctor |
| Pain | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use over-the-counter medicines as directed by your doctor |
| Sweating | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shower often• Dress in layers |
| Sleep problems, including tiredness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take the medicine in the morning• Avoid naps• Go to bed at the same time every night• Do not drink caffeine after lunchtime |
| Dizziness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stand up slowly• Call your doctor if problems persist |
| Mood swing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercise more• Do fun things that do not involve the old drug lifestyle |

Relax, talk to your healthcare provider. Side effects usually go away over time.

DO NOT STOP taking the medicine without talking to your healthcare provider.