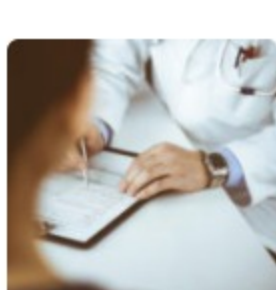


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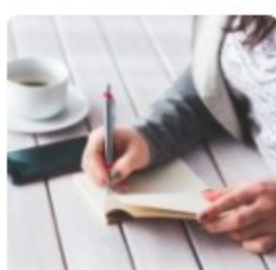
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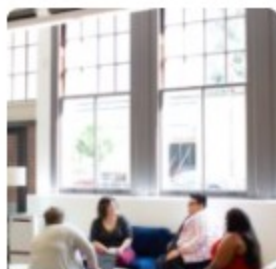
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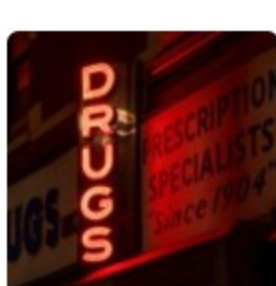
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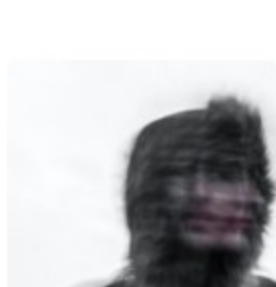
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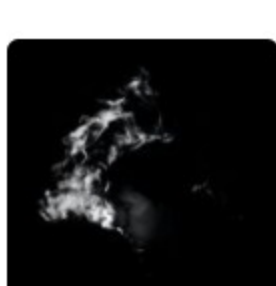
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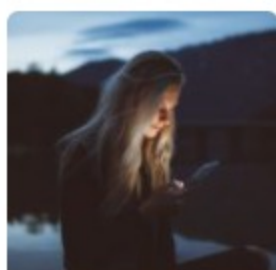
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Understanding The Controversial Role of Buprenorphine in Combating Opioid Addiction

Louisville Addiction Treatment Center - November 29, 2021

Studies show that people with opioid use disorder who follow a [detoxification process](#) with complete abstinence are very likely to relapse. There is a high probability that they will return to using the drug. While suffering from a relapse is a normal step on the path to recovery, it can also be life threatening. A relapse can raise the risk of a fatal overdose.

An important way to support recovery from using heroin or prescription opioids is to maintain abstinence from those drugs. Someone in recovery can also use medications that reduce the negative effects of withdrawal and cravings without producing the euphoria that the original drug of abuse caused. This is how Buprenorphine can help assist people in recovery.

What is Buprenorphine

When you use a prescribed drug to treat a [drug of dependence](#), it is known as pharmacotherapy. As well as improving a patients wellbeing by preventing physical withdrawal, pharmacotherapy helps to stabilise the lives of people who are dependent on heroin and other opioids. The overall aim is to reduce the harm related to drug use. Buprenorphine is a partial opioid agonist, meaning that it binds to those same opioid receptors but activates them less strongly than full agonists do it can reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms in a person with an opioid use disorder without producing euphoria, and patients tend to tolerate it well.

The Law and Buprenorphine

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved buprenorphine in 2002, making it the first medication eligible to be prescribed by certified physicians through the Drug Addiction Treatment Act. Because of this approval from the FDA, it has eliminated the need to visit specialized treatment clinics. This has expanded access to treatment for many who need it.

Additionally, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), which was signed into law in July 2016, expanded the eligibility to prescribe buprenorphine-based drugs for medication-assisted treatment to [qualifying nurse practitioners and physician assistants](#) through to October 1, 2021. Buprenorphine has been available for opioid use disorders since 2002 as a tablet and since 2010 as a sublingual film. Since it was approved, the debate around the ethical uses has been debated but the results for addiction have proved to be promising and helpful to people who want to [get rid of their addiction](#).

Side Effects

As with all medications, there are possible side effects associated with the use of Buprenorphine. These can include the following:

- Sedation
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Low blood pressure (hypotension)
- Nausea
- Spinning sensation (vertigo)
- Sweating
- Vomiting

Less common side effects of buprenorphine include:

- Abdominal cramps
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Constipation
- Depersonalization
- Dilated pupils
- Double vision
- Dry mouth
- Fast heart rate
- Feeling unwell (malaise)
- Hallucinations
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Injection-site reactions
- Itching
- Mental depression
- Nervousness
- Numbness and tingling
- Pauses in breathing, especially during sleep (apnea)
- Psychosis
- Respiratory depression
- Shortness of breath
- Slow heart rate

As you can see, there are many side effects to taking Buprenorphine but the consensus is that these possible side effects do not outweigh the benefits of drug addiction.

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