

## What is Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)?

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is the use of medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders. Medications used in MAT are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and MAT programs are clinically driven and tailored to meet each patient’s needs.

Research shows that a combination of medication and therapy can successfully treat these disorders, and for some people struggling with addiction, MAT can help sustain recovery. MAT is also used to prevent or reduce opioid overdose.

The prescribed medication operates to normalize brain chemistry, block the euphoric effects of alcohol and opioids, relieve physiological cravings, and normalize body functions without the negative and euphoric effects of the substance used.

### **MAT Effectiveness**

In 2018, an estimated 2 million people had an opioid use disorder which includes prescription pain medication containing opiates and heroin.

MAT has proved to be clinically effective and to significantly reduce the need for inpatient detoxification services for these individuals. MAT provides a more comprehensive, individually tailored program of medication and behavioral therapy that address the needs of most patients.

The ultimate goal of MAT is full recovery, including the ability to live a self-directed life. This treatment approach has been shown to:

1. Improve patient survival
2. Increase retention in treatment
3. Decrease illicit opiate use and other criminal activity among people with substance use disorders
4. Increase patients’ ability to gain and maintain employment
5. Improve birth outcomes among women who have substance use disorders and are pregnant

Research also shows that these medications and therapies can contribute to lowering a person’s risk of contracting HIV or hepatitis C by reducing the potential for relapse. Learn more about substance misuse and how it relates to HIV, AIDS, and Viral Hepatitis.

### **MAT Medications**

FDA has approved several different medications to treat alcohol and opioid use disorders. MAT medications relieve the withdrawal symptoms and psychological cravings that cause chemical imbalances in the body. Medications used for MAT are evidence-based treatment options and do not just substitute one drug for another.

# What is Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)?

## Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is the use of medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, which is effective in the treatment of opioid use disorders (OUD) and can help some people to sustain recovery.

More must be done to facilitate treatment options and the development of therapies to address OUD as a chronic disease with long-lasting effects. This means helping more people secure MAT, which requires us to break the stigma often associated with some of the medications used to treat OUD. It also requires us to find new and more effective ways to advance the use of medical therapy for the treatment of OUD.

There are three drugs approved by the FDA for the treatment of opioid dependence: buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone. All three of these treatments have been demonstrated to be safe and effective in combination with counseling and psychosocial support. Everyone who seeks treatment for an OUD should be offered access to all three options as this allows providers to work with patients to select the treatment best suited to an individual's needs. Due to the chronic nature of OUD, the need for continuing MAT should be re-evaluated periodically. There is no maximum recommended duration of maintenance treatment, and for some patients, treatment may continue indefinitely. These MAT medications are safe to use for months, years, or even a lifetime. As with any medication, consult your doctor before discontinuing use.

### **FDA-approved buprenorphine products approved for the treatment of opioid dependence include:**

1. Bunavail (buprenorphine and naloxone) buccal film
2. Cassipa (buprenorphine and naloxone) sublingual film
3. Probuphine (buprenorphine) implant for subdermal administration
4. Sublocade (buprenorphine extended release) injection for subcutaneous use
5. Suboxone (buprenorphine and naloxone) sublingual film for sublingual or buccal use, or sublingual tablet.
6. Subutex (buprenorphine) sublingual tablet
7. Zubsolv (buprenorphine and naloxone) sublingual tablets

### **FDA-approved naltrexone products approved for the treatment of opioid dependence include:**

1. Vivitrol (naltrexone for extended-release injectable suspension) intramuscular
2. Oral Naltrexone

## Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)

Acamprosate, disulfiram, and naltrexone are the most common medications used to treat alcohol use disorder. They do not provide a cure for the disorder but are most effective in people who participate in a MAT program. Learn more about the impact of alcohol misuse.

## Opioid Overdose Prevention Medication

Naloxone is used to prevent opioid overdose by reversing the toxic effects of the overdose. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), naloxone is one of several medications considered essential to a functioning health care system.