

STARTING BUPRENORPHINE: STANDARD INITIATION

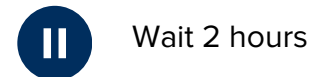
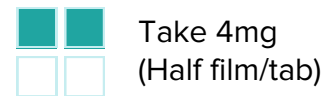
PREPARATION

- Stop the opioid for 8-72 hours (your provider will suggest how long you need to wait).
- When you are in moderate opioid withdrawal, you can begin your buprenorphine. If you begin too early, you can get very sick (precipitated withdrawal).
- Don't drink, eat, or smoke/vape/chew tobacco 15 minutes before or after your buprenorphine dose.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO START BUPRENORPHINE

DAY 1 (take total of 2-3 films/tabs)

- Dissolve half film/tab under your tongue.
- Let buprenorphine dissolve completely in your mouth, do not chew or swallow.
- Wait 2 hours.
- If you feel better or the same, take another half film/tab.
- Then take another full film/tab 6-12 hours later if you feel you need (you likely will).
- If your provider instructed, you may take another full film/tab 6-12 hours later.
- If you feel much worse after your first buprenorphine dose, wait 4-8 hours and try again.



Feel better?



Feel worse?



Take 4mg
(Half film/tab)



Wait 4-8 hours
and try again

DAY 2-7 (take total of 2-3 films/tabs)

- Take one full tab/film in the morning and one full film/tab in the evening.
- If your provider instructed, you may take one full film in the morning, mid-day, and the evening.
- We will call to check on how you are doing.

DAY 7

- We will usually see you back in the office to see how you are doing and adjust your dose if needed.
- Call your clinic with any questions or concerns.

When am I in moderate withdrawal and ready to start buprenorphine?

- Withdrawal is different for everyone. Talk with your clinic if you aren't sure.
- Typical symptoms are large pupils, yawning, sweating, upset stomach, restlessness/can't sit still, runny nose, goose bumps, body aches, anxiety, and/or irritability.
- Use the Subjective Opioid Withdrawal Scale (SOWS) to rate your symptoms and help determine when you are ready to start.

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What can I take to help with my withdrawal symptoms?

Your provider likely prescribed withdrawal support medications. You may start these as soon as you stop your opioid. You may continue these through the first few weeks on buprenorphine if needed.

- Clonidine/Catapres (for restlessness/sleep/anxiety)
- Hydroxyzine/Atarax (for anxiety/sleep)
- Trazodone (for sleep)
- Ondansetron/Zofran (for nausea)
- Dicyclomine/Bentyl (for abdominal cramps)

Subjective Opioid Withdrawal Scale (SOWS)

Use the Subjective Opioid Withdrawal Scale (SOWS) to rate your symptoms and help determine when you are in moderate withdrawal.

Rate each symptom on the scale of 0 - 4 for how you are feeling right now:

- 0 = not at all
- 1 = a little
- 2 = moderately
- 3 = quite a bit
- 4 = extremely

Scoring:

- 1-10 = mild withdrawal
- 11-20 = moderate withdrawal*
- 21-30 = severe withdrawal

*time to start buprenorphine

SYMPTOM	SCORE (0-4)
I feel anxious	
I feel like yawning	
I am sweating	
My eyes are tearing	
My nose is running	
I have goosebumps	
I am shaking	
I have hot flushes	
I have cold flushes	
My bones and muscles ache	
I feel restless	
I feel nauseous	
I feel like vomiting	
My muscles are twitching	
I have stomach cramps	
I feel like using now	
TOTAL SCORE	