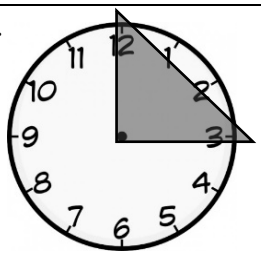
Patient's Guide to Starting Buprenorphine Treatment at Home

Contact Information:

How To Take Your Buprenorphine:

1.	2.	3.	4.
			
Place the buprenorphine strip or tablet under your tongue.	Allow the tablet or strip to fully dissolve. Now the medication is in your saliva, under your tongue. This is how it absorbs into your system.	Wait 10-15 minutes allowing the saliva to pool and remain under your tongue. **DO NOT** swallow the saliva during this time.	After 10-15 minutes of allowing the saliva to sit and pool in your mouth, it is ok to swallow the saliva or spit it out in a trashcan, sink, or toilet.

When to start:

- On day one, it is best to wait as long as possible after your last use of opioids to start taking buprenorphine. With the high-dose method, you **do not** need to be in severe opioid withdrawal to begin.
- **Here is a good rule of thumb for starting buprenorphine:** Wait until your symptoms of opioid withdrawal/craving are severe enough that they would normally lead you to opioid use and start your buprenorphine at that time.
  - Before taking buprenorphine, you will probably experience mild-moderate opioid withdrawal symptoms and/or opioid craving. Remember, if taken appropriately **(**see **How To Take Your Buprenorphine** above**)**, buprenorphine will relieve these symptoms.

How to start:

- Wait for mild-moderate opioid withdrawal and/or cravings as described at left.
- Take 16 mg sublingual (under tongue) buprenorphine (two 8 mg films). (See **How To Take Your Buprenorphine** above).
- Wait 30 minutes.
- Move onto the next page **(How Are You Feeling?)**

How Are You Feeling?

- **If you are feeling better:**
  - No need to take any more buprenorphine at this time.
  - Continue to closely monitor yourself for withdrawal/craving throughout the day.
  - If withdrawal or cravings return, it is okay to take more 4-8 mg doses (one half to one whole film) throughout the day (maximum daily dose of 32 mg or four whole films per day).
- **If you are feeling about the same:**
  - Take another 8 mg (one full film) of buprenorphine following the steps in the How To Take Buprenorphine on page one.
- **If you are feeling worse:**
  - Take another 16 mg (two full films) of buprenorphine (day-one dose: 32 mg)
  - Although the maximum daily dose for maintenance treatment is 32 mg, it is okay to take up to another 16 mg of buprenorphine (total day-one dose 48 mg) if you continue to have moderate-severe withdrawal symptoms after 32 mg of buprenorphine.

Following Day-One Initiation: Effective maintenance doses of buprenorphine for persons with opioid use disorder tend to be in the range of 16-24 mg per day.

Determining your maintenance dose: What day-one initiation dose relieved your symptoms of opioid withdrawal and craving? _____mg

- If your day-one dose was within the range of 16-24 mg, plan to take this same amount on day two. If your day-one dose was lower than this, plan to take the same dose as you did on day one with the option to add more doses later in the day if symptoms of opioid withdrawal/craving arise. The max daily dose is 32 mg.
- It is okay to take your daily maintenance medication as a single dose or to split up the dose throughout the day. **For example: 16 mg daily dose: 8 mg two times per day; 24 mg daily dose: 8 mg three times per day.**
- It can sometimes take several days to settle on an effective maintenance dose. Continue to closely monitor yourself for withdrawal/craving throughout the day.
- If you experience withdrawal or craving while on your maintenance dose, it is okay to take more doses (up to a maximum daily dose of 32 mg).
- We recommend that you increase your dose in 4-mg intervals followed by a monitoring period (30-60 minutes).
- The goal is to be on the lowest effective dose (i.e., the lowest dose that relieves your symptoms of withdrawal and craving for 24 hours). Increasing in smaller intervals (4 mg) allows you to better figure out what this dose is.
- When your symptoms of withdrawal/craving are relieved, stop taking more buprenorphine and record your day-two dose: _____mg
- Plan to take the day-two dose on day three either as a single dose or split up throughout the day.

Next Steps:

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- If you are experiencing any medical concerns and need immediate evaluation, please go to the nearest Emergency Department.