

# TIP 40: Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction: Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 40

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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This Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP), *Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction*, provides consensus- and evidence-based treatment guidance for the use of buprenorphine, a new option for the treatment of opioid addiction. The goal of this TIP is to provide physicians with information they can use to make practical and informed decisions about the use of buprenorphine to treat opioid addiction. These guidelines address the pharmacology and physiology of opioids, opioid addiction, and treatment with buprenorphine; describe patient assessment and the choice of opioid addiction treatment options; provide detailed treatment protocols for opioid withdrawal and maintenance therapy with buprenorphine; and include information on the treatment of special populations, e.g., pregnant women, adolescents, and polysubstance users. This TIP represents another step by the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) toward its goal of bringing national leaders together to improve substance use disorder treatment in the United States.

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## Disclaimer

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The opinions expressed herein are the views of the consensus panel members and do not necessarily reflect the official position of CSAT, SAMHSA, or DHHS. No official support of or endorsement by CSAT, SAMHSA or DHHS for these opinions or for particular instruments, software, or resources described in this document are intended or should be inferred. The guidelines in this document should not be considered substitutes for individualized client care and treatment decisions.

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<http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm>.

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## What Is a TIP?

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Treatment Improvement Protocols (TIPs) are best-practice guidelines for the treatment of substance use disorders, provided as a service of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). CSAT's Office of Evaluation, Scientific Analysis and Synthesis draws on the experience and knowledge of clinical, research, and administrative experts to produce the TIPs, which are distributed to a growing number of facilities and individuals across the country. As alcoholism and other substance use disorders are increasingly recognized as major problems, the audience for the TIPs is expanding beyond public and private substance use disorder treatment facilities.

After selecting a topic, CSAT invites staff from pertinent Federal agencies and national organizations to a resource panel that recommends specific areas of focus as well as resources that should be considered in developing the content of the TIP. Then recommendations are communicated to a consensus panel composed of experts who have been nominated by their peers. This panel participates in a series of discussions; the information and recommendations on which they reach consensus become the foundation of the TIP. The members of each consensus panel represent substance use disorder treatment programs, hospitals, community health centers, counseling programs, criminal justice and child welfare agencies, and private practitioners. A panel chair (or cochairs) ensures that the guidelines mirror the results of the group's collaboration.

A large and diverse group of experts reviews the draft document closely. The Buprenorphine Expert Panel, a distinguished group of substance abuse experts and professionals in such related fields as primary care, mental health, and social services, worked with the Consensus Panel Chair and the CSAT Division of Pharmacologic Therapies to generate new and updated changes to the subject matter for this TIP based on the field's current needs for information and guidance. Once the changes recommended by the field reviewers have been incorporated, the TIP is prepared for publication in print and online.

The TIPs can be accessed via the Internet at <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm>. The use of electronic media also means that the TIPs can be updated more easily so that they can continue to provide the field with state-of-the-art information. Although each TIP includes an evidence base for the practices its panel recommends, CSAT recognizes that the field of substance use disorder treatment is evolving continuously and that research frequently lags behind the innovations pioneered by those in the field. A major goal of each TIP is to convey "front line" information quickly but responsibly. For this reason, recommendations in the TIP are attributed either to panelists' clinical experience or to the appropriate literature. If there is research to support a particular approach, citations are provided.

This TIP, *Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction*, provides consensus- and evidence-based guidance on the use of buprenorphine, a new option for the treatment of opioid addiction. The goal of this TIP is to provide information that physicians can use to make practical and informed decisions about the use of buprenorphine to treat opioid addiction. The Guidelines address a number of topic areas related to this goal, including the physiology and pharmacology of opioids, opioid addiction, and treatment with buprenorphine; the screening and assessment of opioid addiction problems; detailed protocols for opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine; management of special populations; and policies and procedures related to office-based opioid addiction treatment under the paradigm established by the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000. This TIP represents another step by CSAT toward its

goal of bringing national leaders together to improve substance use disorder treatment in the United States.

Other TIPs may be ordered by contacting the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), (800) 729-6686 or (301) 468-2600; TDD (for the hearing impaired), (800) 487-4889. See <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm>.

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## Foreword

Our Nation has made great strides in recent years in achieving recovery for persons with substance use disorders. We know much more about how to deliver recovery-oriented substance abuse treatment, improve service quality, achieve desired improvements in quality-of-life outcomes, and implement needed care systems in each community in the United States. Our vision is of a life in the community for everyone.

The Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) series promotes resilience and facilitates recovery from substance use disorders. The TIPs add to our knowledge base and provide best practice guidance to clinicians, program administrators, and payors. They are the result of careful consideration of all relevant clinical and health services research findings, demonstration experience, and implementation requirements. For each TIP topic, an expert panel of non-Federal clinical researchers, clinicians, program administrators, and patient advocates debates and discusses best practices until its members reach a consensus.

The talent, dedication, and hard work that TIPs panelists and reviewers bring to this highly participatory process have bridged the gap between the promise of research and the needs of practicing clinicians and administrators. We are grateful to all who have joined with us to contribute to advances in the substance use disorder treatment field.

We hope you will find many uses for the information contained in this volume and that you will join in our goal of helping all Americans with substance use disorders realize healthy, contributing lives in their communities nationwide.

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## **TIP 40: Executive Summary**

Federal statute, the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 ([DATA 2000](#)), has established a new paradigm for the medication-assisted treatment of opioid addiction in the United States ([Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000](#)). Prior to the enactment of DATA 2000, the use of opioid medications to treat opioid addiction was permissible only in federally approved Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) (i.e., methadone clinics), and only with the Schedule II opioid medications methadone and levo-alpha-acetyl-methadol (LAAM), which could only be dispensed, not prescribed.<sup>2</sup> Now, under the provisions of DATA 2000, qualifying physicians in the medical office and other appropriate settings outside the OTP system may prescribe and/or dispense

Schedule III, IV, and V opioid medications for the treatment of opioid addiction if such medications have been specifically approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for that indication. (The text of [DATA 2000](http://www.buprenorphine.samhsa.gov/fulllaw.html) can be viewed at <http://www.buprenorphine.samhsa.gov/fulllaw.html>.)

In October 2002, FDA approved two sublingual formulations of the Schedule III opioid partial agonist medication buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid addiction. These medications, Subutex<sup>®</sup> (buprenorphine) and Suboxone<sup>®</sup> (buprenorphine/naloxone), are the first and, as of this writing, the only Schedule III, IV, or V medications to have received such FDA approval and, thus, to be eligible for use under DATA 2000. Office-based treatment with buprenorphine promises to bring opioid addiction care into the mainstream of medical practice, thereby greatly expanding access to treatment and bringing new hope to thousands.

DATA 2000 directs the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to develop a Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) containing best practice guidelines for the treatment and maintenance of opioid-dependent patients. This TIP, *Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction*, is the product of that mandate. The TIP was developed by SAMHSA and a team of independent substance abuse treatment professionals, in consultation with the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and FDA. The purpose of this TIP is to provide physicians with science-based clinical practice guidelines on the use of buprenorphine in the treatment of opioid addiction. The primary audience of this TIP is physicians who are interested in providing buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid addiction.

In developing this TIP, the consensus panel, made up of research and clinical experts in the field of opioid addiction treatment, recognized that while buprenorphine offers new hope to many individuals, pharmacotherapy alone is rarely sufficient for the long-term successful treatment of opioid addiction. As a result, these guidelines emphasize that optimally effective and comprehensive opioid addiction care is achieved when attention is provided to all of an individual's medical and psychosocial comorbidities.

This TIP is composed of 6 chapters and 10 appendices, including a complete list of references ([Appendix A, Bibliography](#)). Chapter 1, Introduction, describes the basic facts regarding opioid addiction, the traditional approaches to its treatment, and the new DATA 2000 treatment paradigm.

Chapter 2, Pharmacology, addresses, in-depth, the physiology and pharmacology of opioids in general, and of buprenorphine in particular. The chapter also provides a review of the research literature regarding the safety and effectiveness of buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid addiction.

Chapter 3, Patient Assessment, summarizes an approach to screening and assessment of individuals who are addicted to opioids and who may be candidates for treatment with buprenorphine.

Chapter 4, Treatment Protocols, provides detailed protocols on the use of buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid addiction, including both maintenance and withdrawal treatment approaches.

Chapter 5, Special Populations, discusses several special populations whose circumstances require careful consideration as they begin buprenorphine treatment. Treating these special populations requires an understanding of available resources and often involves collaboration with specialists in other areas of care.

Chapter 6, Policies and Procedures, discusses legal and regulatory issues pertaining to the provision of opioid addiction treatment, including the procedures and physician qualifications necessary to obtain the required waiver under DATA 2000 to provide office-based opioid addiction treatment, recommended office practice policies and procedures, the security and confidentiality of opioid addiction care information, and the use of buprenorphine in OTPs.

The following sections summarize the content of this TIP and are grouped by chapter.

## **Chapter 1, Introduction**

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Chapter 1 provides an overview of opioid addiction in the United States today, including the historical context of the current treatment environment, the scope of the opioid addiction problem, the traditional approaches to treatment, and an introduction to buprenorphine as an opioid addiction treatment.

Opioid addiction includes not only misuse and abuse of heroin, but also the less commonly recognized issue of misuse and abuse of prescription opioid pain medications, such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, and meperidine.

Rates of addiction to prescription opioids have been increasing. The incidence of emergency department visits related to prescription opioid pain medications has more than doubled between 1994 and 2001. Recent data show that in at least 15 metropolitan areas, two or more narcotic pain medications—primarily oxycodone, hydrocodone, and codeine—were ranked among the 10 most common drugs involved in drug abuse deaths ([SAMHSA 2002b](#)).

The prevalence of heroin addiction in the United States also has been increasing and currently is believed to be the highest it has been since the 1970s. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), an estimated 810,000 to 1,000,000 individuals in the United States were addicted to heroin in the year 2000 ([ONDCP 2003](#)).

Well-run methadone maintenance programs (with programming that includes counseling services, vocational resources, referrals, and appropriate drug monitoring) have been shown to decrease opioid use and related crime, increase employment, and decrease the incidence of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) related to needle sharing. In addition, treatment in such programs improves physical and mental health and decreases overall mortality from opioid addiction. Unfortunately, despite these results, methadone maintenance treatment system capacity has not kept pace with the rise in the prevalence of opioid addiction.

More than 20 years ago, buprenorphine was identified as a viable option for the maintenance treatment of individuals addicted to opioids. Research conducted over the past two decades has documented the safety and effectiveness of buprenorphine for this indication. The enactment of

DATA 2000 has now enabled physicians in the United States to offer specifically approved forms of buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid addiction.

## Chapter 2, Pharmacology

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Buprenorphine has unique pharmacological properties that make it an effective and well-tolerated addition to the available pharmacological treatments for opioid addiction. This chapter reviews the general pharmacology of opioid agonists and antagonists, as well as the opioid *partial agonist* properties of buprenorphine.

Drugs that activate opioid receptors on neurons are termed opioid *agonists*. Heroin and methadone are opioid agonists. The repeated administration of opioid agonists results in dose-dependent physical dependence and tolerance. *Physical dependence* is manifested as a characteristic set of withdrawal signs and symptoms upon reduction, cessation, or loss of an active compound at its receptors. *Addiction*, conversely, is a *behavioral* syndrome characterized by the repeated, compulsive seeking or use of a substance, despite adverse social, psychological, and/or physical consequences. Opioid addiction often, but not always, is accompanied by tolerance, physical dependence, and opioid withdrawal symptoms.

Opioids that bind to opioid receptors but block them, rather than activating them, are termed opioid *antagonists*. Examples of opioid antagonists are naltrexone and naloxone.

Opioid *partial agonists* are drugs that activate receptors, but not to the same degree as full agonists. Increasing the dose of a partial agonist does not produce as great an effect as does increasing the dose of a full agonist. The agonist effects of a partial agonist reach a ceiling at moderate doses and do not increase from that point, even with increases in dosage.

*Buprenorphine is an opioid partial agonist.* It is the partial agonist properties of buprenorphine that make it a safe and an effective option for the treatment of opioid addiction. Buprenorphine has sufficient agonist properties such that when it is administered to individuals who are not opioid dependent but who are familiar with the effects of opioids, they experience subjectively



positive opioid effects. These subjective effects aid in maintaining compliance with buprenorphine dosing in patients who are opioid dependent.

Buprenorphine occupies opioid receptors with great affinity and thus blocks opioid full agonists from exerting their effects. Buprenorphine dissociates from opioid receptors at a slow rate. This enables daily or less frequent dosing of buprenorphine, as infrequently as three times per week in some studies.

Buprenorphine is abusable, consistent with its agonist action at opioid receptors. Its abuse potential, however, is lower in comparison with that of opioid full agonists. A formulation containing buprenorphine in combination with naloxone has been developed to decrease the potential for abuse via the injection route. Physicians who prescribe or dispense buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone should monitor for diversion of the medications.

Due to the potential for serious drug–drug interactions, buprenorphine must be used cautiously with certain other types of medications, particularly benzodiazepines, other sedative drugs, opioid antagonists, medications metabolized by the cytochrome P450 3A4 system, and opioid agonists.

## Chapter 3, Patient Assessment

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This chapter provides an approach to the screening, assessment, and diagnosis of opioid addiction problems, and for determining when buprenorphine is an appropriate option for treatment. The necessary first steps in the medical management of opioid addiction are (1) the use of validated screening tools to identify patients who may have an opioid use problem and (2) further assessment to clearly delineate the scope of an opioid addiction problem when one is identified. When treatment is indicated, consideration must be given to the appropriate treatment approach, treatment setting, and level of treatment intensity, based on a patient's preferences, addiction history, presence of medical or psychiatric comorbidities, and readiness to change. Buprenorphine is a treatment option for many, but not for all.

## Screening

The Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction Consensus Panel recommends that physicians periodically and regularly screen *all* patients for substance use and substance-related problems, not just those patients who fit the stereotypical picture of addiction. Several validated addiction screening instruments are discussed. The full text of selected screening instruments is provided in [Appendix B](#), Assessment and Screening Instruments.

## Assessment

If screening indicates the presence of an opioid use disorder, further assessment is indicated to thoroughly delineate the patient's problem, to identify comorbid or complicating medical or emotional conditions, and to determine the appropriate treatment setting and level of treatment intensity for the patient. Complete assessment may require several office visits, but initial treatment should not be delayed during this period.

The Guidelines document provides recommendations on effective interviewing techniques and on the components of the complete history, physical examination, and recommended initial laboratory evaluation of patients with opioid addiction.

The consensus panel recommends that initial and ongoing drug screening should be used to detect or confirm the recent use of drugs (e.g., alcohol, benzodiazepines, barbiturates), which could complicate patient management. Urine screening is the most commonly used and generally most cost-effective testing method.

## Diagnosis of Opioid-Related Disorders

After a thorough assessment of a patient has been conducted, a formal diagnosis can be made. As a general rule, to be considered for buprenorphine maintenance, patients should have a diagnosis of *opioid dependence*, as defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR) ([American Psychiatric Association 2000](#)).

This diagnosis is based not merely on physical dependence on opioids but rather on opioid addiction with compulsive use despite harm. (See DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria in [Appendix C](#), DSM-IV-TR Material.)

## Determining Appropriateness for Buprenorphine Treatment

A detailed approach to determining the suitability of buprenorphine as a treatment option for patients with opioid addiction is included in the Guidelines. The evaluation includes determining if appropriate patient motivation exists and ruling out contraindicating medical and psychiatric comorbidities.

Patients for whom buprenorphine may be an appropriate treatment option are those who

- Are interested in treatment for opioid addiction
- Have no contraindications to buprenorphine treatment
- Can be expected to be reasonably compliant with such treatment
- Understand the benefits and risks of buprenorphine treatment
- Are willing to follow safety precautions for buprenorphine treatment
- Agree to buprenorphine treatment after a review of treatment options

Patients less likely to be appropriate candidates for buprenorphine treatment of opioid addiction *in an office-based setting* are individuals whose circumstances or conditions include

- Comorbid dependence on high doses of benzodiazepines or other central nervous system depressants (including alcohol)
- Significant untreated psychiatric comorbidity
- Active or chronic suicidal or homicidal ideation or attempts
- Multiple previous treatments for drug abuse with frequent relapses (except that multiple previous *detoxification* attempts followed by relapse are a strong indication for long-term *maintenance* treatment)
- Poor response to previous treatment attempts with buprenorphine
- Significant medical complications

## Chapter 4, Treatment Protocols

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This chapter provides detailed protocols for the use of buprenorphine in the treatment of opioid addiction. A variety of clinical scenarios are addressed, including whether patients are addicted to long- versus short-acting opioids, and whether the approach selected is maintenance treatment or medically supervised withdrawal (which **must** be followed by long-term drug-free or naltrexone treatment to be useful to the patient).

### Maintenance Treatment

Maintenance treatment with buprenorphine for opioid addiction consists of three phases: (1) induction, (2) stabilization, and (3) maintenance. Induction is the first stage of buprenorphine treatment and involves helping patients begin the process of switching from the opioid of abuse to buprenorphine. The goal of the induction phase is to find the minimum dose of buprenorphine at which the patient discontinues or markedly diminishes use of other opioids and experiences no withdrawal symptoms, minimal or no side effects, and no craving for the drug of abuse. The consensus panel recommends that the buprenorphine/naloxone combination be used for induction treatment (and for stabilization and maintenance) for most patients. The consensus panel further recommends that initial induction doses be administered as observed treatment; further doses may be provided via prescription thereafter.

To minimize the chances of precipitated withdrawal, patients who are transferring from long-acting opioids (e.g., methadone, sustained release morphine, sustained release oxycodone) to buprenorphine should be inducted using buprenorphine monotherapy, but switched to buprenorphine/naloxone soon thereafter. Because of the potential for naloxone to precipitate withdrawal in both mother and fetus, pregnant women who are deemed to be appropriate candidates for buprenorphine treatment should be inducted and maintained on buprenorphine monotherapy.

The stabilization phase has begun when a patient is experiencing no withdrawal symptoms, is experiencing minimal or no side effects, and no longer has uncontrollable cravings for opioid

agonists. Dosage adjustments may be necessary during early stabilization, and frequent contact with the patient increases the likelihood of compliance.

The longest period that a patient is on buprenorphine is the maintenance phase. This period may be indefinite. During the maintenance phase, attention must be focused on the psychosocial and family issues that have been identified during the course of treatment as contributing to a patient's addiction.

## Medically Supervised Withdrawal (“Detoxification”)

Buprenorphine can be used for the medically supervised withdrawal of patients from both self-administered opioids and from opioid agonist treatment with methadone or LAAM. The goal of using buprenorphine for medically supervised withdrawal from opioids is to provide a transition from the state of physical dependence on opioids to an opioid-free state, while minimizing withdrawal symptoms (and avoiding side effects of buprenorphine).

Medically supervised withdrawal with buprenorphine consists of an induction phase and a dose-reduction phase. The consensus panel recommends that patients dependent on short-acting opioids (e.g., hydromorphone, oxycodone, heroin) who will be receiving medically supervised withdrawal be inducted directly onto buprenorphine/naloxone tablets. The use of buprenorphine (either as buprenorphine monotherapy or buprenorphine/naloxone combination treatment) to taper off long-acting opioids should be considered only for those patients who have evidence of sustained medical and psychosocial stability, and should be undertaken in conjunction and in coordination with patients' OTPs.

## Nonpharmacological Interventions

Pharmacotherapy alone is rarely sufficient treatment for drug addiction. For most patients, drug abuse counseling—individual or group—and participation in self-help programs are necessary components of comprehensive addiction care. As part of training in the treatment of opioid addiction, physicians should at a minimum obtain some knowledge about the basic principles of brief intervention in case of relapse. Physicians considering providing opioid addiction care should

ensure that they are capable of providing psychosocial services, either in their own practices or through referrals to reputable behavioral health practitioners in their communities. In fact, DATA 2000 stipulates that when physicians submit notification to SAMHSA to obtain the required waiver to practice opioid addiction treatment outside the OTP setting, they must attest to their capacity to refer such patients for appropriate counseling and other nonpharmacological therapies.

## Treatment Monitoring

Patients and their physicians together need to reach agreement on the goals of treatment and develop a treatment plan based on the patient's particular problems and needs. During the stabilization phase, patients receiving maintenance treatment should be seen on at least a weekly basis. Once a stable buprenorphine dose is reached and toxicologic samples are free of illicit opioids, the physician may determine that less frequent visits (biweekly or longer, up to 30 days) are acceptable. During opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine, toxicology tests for relevant illicit drugs should be administered at least monthly.

## Chapter 5, Special Populations

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This chapter discusses the approach to patients who have certain life circumstances or comorbid medical or behavioral conditions that warrant special consideration during the assessment and treatment of opioid addiction.

### Patients With Medical Comorbidities

Patients who are addicted to opioids often have other medical comorbid problems as a consequence of both high-risk behaviors and of direct toxic effects of the active and inert ingredients in illicit drugs. In patients being treated with buprenorphine for opioid addiction, it is important to screen for and manage common comorbid medical conditions and to anticipate known and potential drug interactions.

### Pregnant Women and Neonates

The scant evidence available does not show any causal adverse effects on pregnancy or neonatal outcomes from buprenorphine treatment, but this evidence is from case series, not from controlled studies. Methadone is currently the standard of care in the United States for the treatment of opioid addiction in pregnant women. Pregnant women who present for treatment of opioid addiction should be referred to specialized services in methadone maintenance treatment programs. If such specialized services are refused by a patient or are unavailable in the community, maintenance treatment with buprenorphine may be considered as an alternative.

## Adolescents/Young Adults

Buprenorphine can be a useful option for the treatment of adolescents with opioid addiction problems. The treatment of addiction in adolescents, however, is complicated by a number of medical, legal, and ethical considerations. Physicians intending to treat addiction in adolescents should be thoroughly familiar with the laws in their States regarding parental consent. Physicians who do not specialize in the treatment of opioid addiction should strongly consider consulting with, or referring adolescent patients to, addiction specialists. Additionally, State child protection agencies can be a valuable resource when determining the proper disposition for adolescent patients addicted to opioids.

## Geriatric Patients

Literature on the use of buprenorphine in geriatric patients is extremely limited. Due to potential differences in rates of metabolism and absorption compared to younger individuals, care should be exercised in the use of buprenorphine in geriatric patients.

## Patients With Significant Psychiatric Comorbidity

The presence and severity of comorbid psychiatric conditions must be assessed prior to initiating buprenorphine treatment, and a determination made whether referral to specialized behavioral health services is necessary. The psychiatric disorders most commonly encountered in patients addicted to opioids are other substance abuse disorders, depressive disorders, posttraumatic

stress disorder, substance-induced psychiatric disorders, and antisocial and borderline personality disorder.

As with medical comorbidities, it is important to explore the medications used to treat the other psychiatric conditions. Assessing for drug interactions is a critical part of the process.

## Polysubstance Abuse

Abuse of multiple drugs (polysubstance abuse) by individuals addicted to opioids is common. Pharmacotherapy with buprenorphine for opioid addiction will not necessarily have a beneficial effect on an individual's use of other drugs. Care in the prescribing of buprenorphine for patients who abuse alcohol and for those who abuse sedative/hypnotic drugs (especially benzodiazapines) must be exercised because of the documented potential for fatal interactions.

## Patients With Pain

Physicians may encounter particular complexities with regard to abuse and addiction in the use of opioids to treat patients with pain. Some patients move from needing prescription opioids for the treatment of pain to abusing them. Physicians concerned about this changing diagnostic picture now may legally use an opioid—buprenorphine—to help facilitate a controlled detoxification in order to manage the physical dependence of the patient who no longer has pain that requires an opioid, but who continues to take the opioid for its mood-altering effects.

Patients who need treatment for pain *but not for addiction* should be treated within the context of a medical or surgical setting. They should not be transferred to an opioid maintenance treatment program simply because they have become physically dependent on prescribed opioids in the course of medical treatment.

Patients who *are* being treated for addiction also may experience pain due to illness or injury unrelated to drug use. Pain in patients receiving buprenorphine treatment for opioid addiction should be treated initially with nonopioid analgesics when appropriate.



Patients maintained on buprenorphine whose acute pain is not relieved by nonopioid medications should receive the usual aggressive pain management, which may include the use of short-acting opioid pain relievers. While patients are taking opioid pain medications, the administration of buprenorphine generally should be discontinued. When restarting buprenorphine, to prevent acutely precipitating withdrawal, administration generally should not begin until sufficient time has elapsed for the opioid pain medication to have cleared from the patient's system, as demonstrated by the onset of early withdrawal symptoms. Patients who are receiving long-acting opioids for chronic severe pain may not be good candidates for buprenorphine treatment because of the ceiling effect on buprenorphine's analgesic properties.

## Patients Recently Discharged From Controlled Environments

A number of issues should be considered in determining the most appropriate treatment modalities for patients with addiction who are recently released from controlled environments (e.g., prison). Intensive buprenorphine monitoring activities are required, and treating physicians may be called upon to verify and explain treatment regimens (e.g., to parole and probation officers); to document patient compliance; and to interact with the legal system, employers, and others. If an OTP alternative is available, physicians should determine if any patient factors preclude referral.

## Healthcare Professionals Who Are Addicted to Opioids

There is a substantial problem of addiction to prescription opioids among physicians and other health professionals, especially within certain specialties. Prescription opioid addiction in health professionals should be viewed as an occupational hazard of the practice of medicine. Health professionals with substance abuse disorders often require specialized, extended care.

## Chapter 6, Policies and Procedures

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This chapter presents information on a number of administrative and regulatory issues pertaining to the use of controlled substances in the treatment of opioid addiction that are beyond the

general medico-legal responsibilities that govern most other types of medical practice. Physicians should become thoroughly familiar with these issues prior to undertaking the treatment of opioid addiction.

## The DATA 2000 Waiver

To practice office-based treatment of opioid addiction under the auspices of DATA 2000, physicians must first obtain a waiver from the special registration requirements established in the Narcotic Addict Treatment Act of 1974 and its enabling regulations. To obtain a DATA 2000 waiver, a physician must submit notification to SAMHSA of his or her intent to begin dispensing and/or prescribing this treatment. The Notification of Intent form must contain information on the physician's qualifying credentials and must contain additional certifications, including that the physician (or the physician's group practice) will not treat more than 30 patients for addiction at any one time. Notification of Intent forms can be filled out and submitted online at the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Web site at <http://www.buprenorphine.samhsa.gov>. Alternatively, the form can be printed out from the site and submitted via ground mail or fax. (The site contains detailed information about buprenorphine, the DATA 2000 paradigm, and the physician waiver process.) Physicians who meet the qualifications defined in DATA 2000 are issued a waiver by SAMHSA and a special identification number by DEA.

To qualify for a DATA 2000 waiver, physicians must have completed at least 8 hours of approved training in the treatment of opioid addiction or have certain other qualifications as defined in the legislation (e.g., clinical research experience with the treatment medication, certification in addiction medicine) and must attest that they can provide or refer patients to the necessary, concurrent psychosocial services. The consensus panel recommends that all physicians who plan to practice opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine attend a DATA 2000-qualifying 8-hour training program on buprenorphine. SAMHSA maintains a list of upcoming DATA 2000-qualifying buprenorphine training sessions on the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Web site. Additional information about DATA 2000 and buprenorphine also can be obtained by contacting the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Information Center by phone at 866-BUP-CSAT (866-287-2728) or via e-mail at [info@buprenorphine.samhsa.gov](mailto:info@buprenorphine.samhsa.gov).

## Preparing for Office-Based Opioid Treatment

Prior to embarking on the provision of office-based addiction treatment services, medical practices that will be new to this form of care should undertake certain preparations to ensure the highest quality experience for patients, providers, and staff. Providers and practice staff should have an appropriate level of training, experience, and comfort with opioid addiction treatment. Linkages with other medical and mental health professionals should be established to ensure continuity of treatment and the availability of comprehensive, community-based, psychosocial services.

## Privacy and Confidentiality

The privacy and confidentiality of individually identifiable drug or alcohol treatment information is protected by SAMHSA confidentiality regulation Title 42, Part 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (42 C.F.R. Part 2). This regulation mandates that addiction treatment information in the possession of substance abuse treatment providers be handled with a greater degree of confidentiality than general medical information. Among other stipulations, regulation 42 C.F.R. Part 2 requires that physicians providing opioid addiction treatment obtain signed patient consent before disclosing individually identifiable addiction treatment information to any third party. The requirement for signed patient consent extends to activities such as telephoning or faxing addiction treatment prescriptions to pharmacies, as this information constitutes disclosure of the patient's addiction treatment. A sample consent form with all the elements required by 42 C.F.R. Part 2 is included as [Appendix D](#), Consent to Release of Information Under 42 C.F.R. Part 2.

## Buprenorphine Use in OTPs

In May 2003, the Federal OTP regulations (42 C.F.R. Part 8) were amended to add Subutex<sup>®</sup> and Suboxone<sup>®</sup> to the list of approved opioid medications that may be used in federally certified and registered OTPs (i.e., methadone clinics). OTPs that choose to use Subutex<sup>®</sup> and Suboxone<sup>®</sup> in the treatment of opioid addiction must adhere to the same Federal treatment standards established for all medications under 42 C.F.R. Part 8.

## Footnotes

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Due to a number of factors, including the association of LAAM with cardiac arrhythmias in some patients, as of January 1, 2004, the sole manufacturer has ceased production of the drug.

# TIP 40: 1 Introduction

## Practical Guidelines for Physicians

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Physicians are invited to use the *Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction* to make practical and informed decisions about the treatment of opioid addiction with buprenorphine. This document provides step-by-step guidance through the opioid addiction treatment decisionmaking process. Using the materials provided in these guidelines, physicians should be able to (1) perform initial screening and assessment of patients with opioid addiction, (2) determine the appropriateness of buprenorphine treatment for patients with opioid addiction, (3) provide treatment of opioid addiction with buprenorphine according to established protocols, (4) assess for the presence of and arrange appropriate treatment services for comorbid medical and psychosocial conditions, and (5) determine when to seek specialty addiction treatment referral or consultation.

The history of opioid addiction treatment forms an important backdrop for the decisions that physicians will make regarding their use of buprenorphine. Developing informed decisions about care should take into account the state of the art of opioid addiction treatment and ancillary services that exist to support both the patient and physician.

## Historical Context

A significant breakthrough in the treatment of opioid addiction occurred with the introduction of methadone in the 1960s. Methadone maintenance proved safe and effective and enabled

patients to lead functional lives—something that was often not possible using only drug-free approaches. Within a few years of its introduction, however, new laws and regulations in the United States, including the Methadone Regulations in 1972 and the Narcotic Addict Treatment Act of 1974, effectively limited methadone maintenance treatment to the context of the Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) (i.e., methadone clinic) setting. These laws and regulations established a closed distribution system for methadone that required special licensing by both Federal and State authorities. The new system made it very difficult for physicians to use methadone to treat opioid addiction in an office setting or even in a general drug rehabilitation program. To receive methadone maintenance, patients were required to attend an OTP, usually on a daily basis. The stigma and inconvenience associated with receiving methadone maintenance in the OTP setting led, in part, to the current situation in the United States in which it is estimated that fewer than 25 percent of the individuals with opioid addiction receive any form of treatment for it (National Institutes of Health 1997). Another result of the closed distribution system was that most U.S. physicians were prevented from gaining experience and expertise in the treatment of opioid addiction. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of the longer acting opioid agonist levo-alpha-acetyl-methadol (LAAM) in the 1990s did little to change the situation.<sup>2</sup> (Additional information about substance abuse statistics and treatment availability in the United States can be found on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA] Office of Applied Studies [OAS] Web site at <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/>).

Efforts to return opioid addiction treatment to the mainstream of medical care began to take shape and gain momentum in the 1990s. In October 2000, the Children’s Health Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-310) was enacted into law. Title XXXV of the Act provides a “Waiver Authority for Physicians Who Dispense or Prescribe Certain Narcotic Drugs for Maintenance Treatment or Detoxification Treatment of Opioid-Dependent Patients.” This part of the law is known as the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000; Clark 2003).

Under the provisions of DATA 2000, qualifying physicians may now obtain a waiver from the special registration requirements in the Narcotic Addict Treatment Act of 1974, and its enabling

regulations, to treat opioid addiction with Schedule III, IV, and V opioid medications that have been specifically approved by FDA for that indication, and to prescribe and/or dispense these medications in treatment settings other than licensed OTPs, including in office-based settings. On October 8, 2002, two new sublingual formulations of the opioid partial agonist *buprenorphine*, Subutex® (buprenorphine) and Suboxone® (buprenorphine/naloxone), became the first and, as of this writing, the only Schedule III, IV, or V medications to have received this FDA approval.

To qualify for a DATA 2000 waiver, physicians must have completed at least 8 hours of approved training in the treatment of opioid addiction or have certain other qualifications defined in the legislation (e.g., clinical research experience with the treatment medication, certification in addiction medicine) and must attest that they can provide or refer patients to necessary, concurrent psychosocial services. (Chapter 6 provides a detailed discussion of the qualifying criteria defined in [DATA 2000](#) and of the procedure for obtaining a waiver.)

Physicians who obtain DATA 2000 waivers may treat opioid addiction with Subutex® or Suboxone® in any appropriate clinical settings in which they are credentialed to practice medicine. The promise of DATA 2000 is to help destigmatize opioid addiction treatment and to enable qualified physicians to manage opioid addiction in their own practices, thus greatly expanding currently available treatment options and increasing the overall availability of treatment.

## New Guidelines

The new guidelines provide information about the medical use of buprenorphine, based on (1) the evidence available from buprenorphine studies and (2) clinical experience using buprenorphine in the treatment of opioid addiction. The guidelines are as complete as the expert members of the Consensus Panel on Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction could make them and should provide a reasonable basis for current best practices in the area. Physicians should note that the guidelines are not intended to fully address all possible issues that can arise in the treatment of patients who are addicted to opioids. Some issues cannot be substantively addressed in the guidelines because of the lack of

controlled studies and the limited U.S. experience using buprenorphine in office-based settings. Physicians are urged to seek the advice of knowledgeable addiction specialists if their questions are not answered fully by the guidelines, and should keep themselves aware of training and information on the use of buprenorphine that becomes available after the publication of this document. Such information will be posted regularly on the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Web site at <http://www.buprenorphine.samhsa.gov>.

## Opioid Addiction Today in the United States

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### Opioid Addiction

*Opioid addiction* is a neurobehavioral syndrome characterized by the repeated, compulsive seeking or use of an opioid despite adverse social, psychological, and/or physical consequences.

Addiction is often (but not always) accompanied by physical dependence, a withdrawal syndrome, and tolerance. *Physical dependence* is defined as a physiological state of adaptation to a substance, the absence of which produces symptoms and signs of withdrawal. *Withdrawal syndrome* consists of a predictable group of signs and symptoms resulting from abrupt removal of, or a rapid decrease in the regular dosage of, a psychoactive substance. The syndrome is often characterized by overactivity of the physiological functions that were suppressed by the drug and/or depression of the functions that were stimulated by the drug. *Tolerance* is a state in which a drug produces a diminishing biological or behavioral response; in other words, higher doses are needed to produce the same effect that the user experienced initially.

It is possible to be physically dependent on a drug without being addicted to it, and conversely, it is possible to be addicted without being physically dependent ([Nelson et al. 1982](#)). An example of physical dependence on opioids without addiction is a patient with cancer who becomes tolerant of and physically dependent on opioids prescribed to control pain. Such a patient may experience withdrawal symptoms with discontinuation of the usual dose but will not experience social, psychological, or physical harm from using the drug and would not seek out the drug if it were no longer needed for analgesia ([Jacox et al. 1994](#)). An example of addiction to opioids without

physical dependence is a patient addicted to oxycodone who has been recently detoxified from the drug. In this situation, the patient may no longer be suffering from withdrawal symptoms or tolerance but may continue to crave an opioid high and will invariably relapse to active opioid abuse without further treatment.

Factors contributing to the development of opioid addiction include the reinforcing properties and availability of opioids, family and peer influences, sociocultural environment, personality, and existing psychiatric disorders. Genetic heritage appears to influence susceptibility to alcohol addiction and, possibly, addiction to tobacco and other drugs as well ([Goldstein 1994](#)).

## Addiction Rates

According to the January 2003 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) Report published by SAMHSA's OAS, the incidence of abuse of prescription opioid pain medications (also known as narcotic analgesics), such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, meperidine, and propoxyphene, has risen markedly in recent years ([Crane 2003](#)). The incidence of emergency department (ED) visits related to these medications has been increasing since the 1990s and has more than doubled between 1994 and 2001 ([Crane 2003](#)). In 2001, there were an estimated 90,232 ED visits related to opioid analgesic abuse, a 117 percent increase since 1994. Nationally, opioid analgesics were involved in 14 percent of all drug-abuse-related ED visits in 2001 (SAMHSA 2002b). According to the DAWN Mortality Data Report for 2002 ([SAMHSA 2002c](#)), hydrocodone ranked among the 10 most common drugs related to deaths in 18 cities, including Detroit (63), Las Vegas (46), Dallas (36), New Orleans (33), and Oklahoma City (31). Oxycodone ranked among the 10 most common drugs related to deaths in 19 cities, including Philadelphia (88), Baltimore (34), Boston (34), Phoenix (34), and Miami (28).

According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), there were an estimated 810,000 to 1,000,000 individuals addicted to heroin in the United States in the year 2000—which is the highest number since the mid-to-late 1970s ([ONDCP 2003](#)). Several factors have contributed to this increase. Historically, heroin purity has been less than 10 percent. By the late 1990s, however, purity was between 50 and 80 percent. The increase in purity has made heroin



easier to use by noninjection routes, such as snorting and smoking. Because individuals can become addicted to or overdose from heroin taken via any route, the increase in the type and number of routes used has led to a rise in new cases of heroin addiction across all sociodemographic categories.

Many addicted individuals may switch to the injection route as their heroin use continues to increase, or if heroin purity should decrease again. An increase in rates of injection drug use would have a significant effect on the incidence of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases.

The rise of heroin use appears to be a nationwide phenomenon in the United States. Heroin overdose deaths have risen sharply, as have ED admissions involving heroin. The most recent data on such ED admissions come from SAMHSA's DAWN reports, which can be accessed via the Web at the following sites: <http://dawninfo.samhsa.gov/> or <http://www.nida.nih.gov/CEWG/DAWN.html>.

## Current State of Opioid Addiction Treatment

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There are two main modalities for the treatment of opioid addiction: pharmacotherapy and psychosocial therapy. Pharmacotherapies now available for opioid addiction include (1) agonist maintenance with methadone; (2) partial-agonist maintenance with buprenorphine or buprenorphine plus naloxone; (3) antagonist maintenance using naltrexone; and (4) the use of antiwithdrawal ("detoxification") agents (e.g., methadone, buprenorphine, and/or clonidine) for brief periods, and in tapering doses, to facilitate entry into drug-free or antagonist treatment.

Psychosocial approaches (e.g., residential therapeutic communities), mutual-help programs (e.g., Narcotics Anonymous), and 12-Step- or abstinence-based treatment programs are important modalities in the treatment of addiction to heroin and other opioids, either as stand-alone interventions or in combination with pharmacotherapy.

In 2003, more than 200,000 individuals in the United States were maintained on methadone or LAAM ([SAMHSA 2002a](#)). Although precise data are difficult to obtain, it is estimated that fewer than 5,000 individuals are maintained on naltrexone for opioid addiction. The number of individuals in 12-Step programs is unknown because of the undisclosed nature of the programs and their assurance of anonymity. The number of patients in residential therapeutic community treatment who identify opioids as their primary drugs of abuse is conservatively estimated at 3,000–4,000. (This estimate is derived from various sources, both published, such as Drug Abuse Treatment Outcome Studies [DATOS], and unpublished, such as Therapeutic Communities of America reports, found at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/about/organization/dspr/DATOS.html> and <http://www.therapeuticcommunitiesofamerica.org>.)

## Current Pharmacotherapy Treatment Options for Opioid Addiction

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Three traditional types of pharmacotherapy for opioid addiction are described briefly in this section: (1) agonist treatment (e.g., methadone pharmacotherapy), (2) antagonist treatment (e.g., naltrexone), and (3) the use of these and other agents (e.g., clonidine) to help withdrawal from opioid drugs as a means of entry into treatment. A discussion of the new treatment option using buprenorphine follows.

### Agonist Pharmacotherapy

Methadone is the most commonly used medication for opioid addiction treatment in the United States. Well-run OTPs—with appropriate drug monitoring, counseling services (individual, group, family), and vocational resources and referrals—have been demonstrated to decrease heroin use and related crime, increase employment, improve physical and mental health ([McLellan et al. 1993](#)), and markedly reduce mortality (see the forthcoming TIP *Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction* [CSAT in development<sup>±</sup> ]), as well as the incidence of needle sharing ([Metzger et al. 1991](#)) and HIV transmission ([Metzger et al. 1993](#)). Methadone suppresses opioid withdrawal, blocks the effects of other opioids, and decreases craving for opioids.

## Antagonist Pharmacotherapy

Naltrexone is an opioid antagonist that blocks the effects of heroin and most other opioids. It does not have addictive properties or produce physical dependence, and tolerance does not develop. It has a long half-life, and its therapeutic effects can last up to 3 days. Naltrexone is not a stigmatized treatment. It also decreases the likelihood of alcohol relapse when used to treat alcohol dependence.

From a purely pharmacological point of view, naltrexone would appear to have the properties of a useful medication for the treatment of opioid addiction. Its usefulness in the treatment of opioid addiction, however, has been limited because of certain disadvantages. First, many addicted patients are not interested in taking naltrexone because, unlike methadone and LAAM, it has no opioid agonist effects; patients continue to experience cravings and are thereby not motivated to maintain adherence to the medication regimen. Second, a patient addicted to opioids must be fully withdrawn for up to 2 weeks from all opioids before beginning naltrexone treatment. Unfortunately, during this withdrawal period, many patients relapse to use of opioids and are unable to start on naltrexone. Furthermore, once patients have started on naltrexone, it may increase the risk for overdose death if relapse does occur.

Naltrexone has demonstrated some utility among subgroups of addicted patients with strong motivation and psychosocial support for treatment and medication adherence (e.g., healthcare professionals, business executives, younger patients, patients involved in the criminal justice system). Because most addicted patients will not voluntarily take naltrexone, however, the number of individuals maintained on it continues to be low. Research is under way on a number of sustained-release, injectable forms of naltrexone in an effort to increase adherence, particularly in the early stages of treatment.

## Agents Used To Assist With Withdrawal From Opioid Drugs

Medically supervised withdrawal (detoxification) from opioids is an initial component of certain treatment programs but, by itself, does not constitute treatment of addiction. A variety of agents

and methods are available for medically supervised withdrawal from opioids. These include methadone dose-reduction, the use of clonidine and other alpha-adrenergic agonists to suppress withdrawal signs and symptoms, and rapid detoxification procedures (e.g., with a combination of naltrexone or naloxone and clonidine and, more recently, buprenorphine). Each of these methods has strengths and weaknesses. When used properly, various pharmacological agents can produce safe and less uncomfortable opioid withdrawal. As a result of the increasing purity of street heroin, however, physicians are reporting more difficulty managing patients with the use of clonidine and other alpha-adrenergic agonists during withdrawal.

Unfortunately, the majority of individuals addicted to opioids relapse to opioid use after withdrawal, regardless of the withdrawal method used. Too often, physicians and facilities use dose-reduction and withdrawal in isolation without adequate arrangements for the appropriate treatment and support services that decrease the likelihood of relapse and that are usually necessary for long-term recovery. (For more information about agents used to assist with withdrawal, see the forthcoming TIP *Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction* [CSAT in development].)

## Buprenorphine: A New Treatment Option for Opioid Addiction

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Buprenorphine's pharmacological and safety profile (see chapter 2) makes it an attractive treatment for patients addicted to opioids as well as for the medical professionals treating them. Buprenorphine is a partial agonist at the mu opioid receptor and an antagonist at the kappa receptor. It has very high affinity and low intrinsic activity at the mu receptor and will displace morphine, methadone, and other opioid full agonists from the receptor. Its partial agonist effects imbue buprenorphine with several clinically desirable pharmacological properties: lower abuse potential, lower level of physical dependence (less withdrawal discomfort), a *ceiling effect* at higher doses, and greater safety in overdose compared with opioid full agonists.

At analgesic doses, buprenorphine is 20–50 times more potent than morphine. Because of its low intrinsic activity at the mu receptor, however, at increasing doses, unlike a full opioid agonist, the agonist effects of buprenorphine reach a maximum and do not continue to increase linearly

with increasing doses of the drug—the ceiling effect. One consequence of the ceiling effect is that an overdose of buprenorphine is less likely to cause fatal respiratory depression than is an overdose of a full mu opioid agonist.

In the pharmacotherapy of opioid addiction, buprenorphine, as a partial opioid agonist, can be thought of as occupying a midpoint between opioid full agonists (e.g., methadone, LAAM) and opioid antagonists (e.g., naltrexone, nalmeffene). It has sufficient agonist properties such that individuals addicted to opioids perceive a reinforcing subjective effect from the medication, often described in terms of “feeling normal.” In higher doses, and under certain circumstances, its antagonist properties can cause the precipitation of acute withdrawal if administered to an individual who is physically dependent on opioids and maintained on a sufficient dose of a full agonist. In this scenario, buprenorphine can displace the full agonist from the mu receptors, yet not provide the equivalent degree of receptor activation, thereby leading to a net decrease in agonist effect and the onset of withdrawal. (See chapter 2 for more details on such effects.) Furthermore, because of the high affinity of buprenorphine for the opioid receptor, this precipitated abstinence syndrome may be difficult to reverse. Buprenorphine produces a blockade to subsequently administered opioid agonists in a dose-responsive manner. This effect makes the drug particularly appealing to well-motivated patients, as it provides an additional disincentive to continued opioid use.

Buprenorphine can produce euphoria, especially if it is injected. Buprenorphine does produce physical dependence, although it appears to do so to a lesser degree than do full opioid agonists, and it appears to be easier to discontinue at the end of medication treatment.

Buprenorphine has several pharmaceutical uses. It is a potent analgesic, available in many countries as a 0.3–0.4 mg sublingual tablet (Temgesic®). Until 2002, the only form of buprenorphine approved and marketed in the United States was the parenteral form for treatment of pain (Buprenex®). In 2002, two sublingual tablet formulations of buprenorphine were approved by FDA as opioid addiction treatment medications: buprenorphine alone (Subutex®) and a combination tablet containing buprenorphine plus naloxone in a 4:1 ratio (Suboxone®). Both of these tablets are Schedule III opioids and therefore eligible for use in the

treatment of opioid addiction under DATA 2000. [Figure 1-1](#) shows the dosage forms of buprenorphine currently available in the United States. Note that, as of the date of this publication, Subutex® and Suboxone® are the only forms of buprenorphine that are indicated and can be legally used for the treatment of opioid addiction in the United States—neither Buprenex® nor its generic equivalent can be used legally to treat opioid addiction.

**Dosage Forms of Buprenorphine Available in the United States (as of July 2004)**

<b>Medication</b>	<b>Trade Name</b>	<b>Dosage Form(s)</b>	<b>Indication</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>FDA-Approved for Opioid Addiction Treatment</b>
Buprenorphine	Subutex®	2- or 8-mg sublingual tablets	Opioid addiction	Reckitt Benckiser	Yes
Buprenorphine/ naloxone combination	Suboxone®	2- or 8-mg sublingual tablets with buprenorphine/ naloxone in 4:1 ratio	Opioid addiction	Reckitt Benckiser	Yes
Buprenorphine	Buprenex®	Injectable ampules	Moderate - to-severe pain	Reckitt Benckiser	No

<b>Medication</b>	<b>Trade Name</b>	<b>Dosage Form(s)</b>	<b>Indication</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>FDA-Approved for Opioid Addiction Treatment</b>
Buprenorphine	Buprenorphine injectable (generic)	Injectable ampules	Moderate to-severe pain	Abbott Laboratories	No

Many of the large clinical studies of buprenorphine in the treatment of opioid addiction in the United States have been conducted under the joint sponsorship of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and Reckitt Benckiser, the company holding the buprenorphine patent. The most extensive clinical experience with buprenorphine used for treatment of opioid addiction is in France, where the medication has been available for office-based treatment of opioid addiction since February 1996. In France, buprenorphine can be prescribed for maintenance treatment by both addiction specialists and general practitioners. It is estimated that close to 70,000 patients are currently receiving maintenance treatment with buprenorphine in France.

Buprenorphine doses studied for opioid addiction treatment have ranged from 1–2 mg to 16–32 mg, depending upon the formulation (solution versus tablet), with duration of treatment lasting from a few weeks to years. Using the outcome measures of illicit opioid use, retention in treatment, and assessment for adverse events, studies have shown that buprenorphine treatment reduces opioid use, retains patients in treatment, has few side effects, and is acceptable to most patients (Johnson et al. 1992, 2000; Ling et al. 1996, 1998; O'Connor and Fiellin 2000).

Although buprenorphine has been abused and injected by individuals addicted to opioids in countries where the sublingual tablet is available as an analgesic, its abuse potential appears

substantially less than that of full opioid agonists. To reduce the potential for abuse even further, the sublingual tablet dosage form combining buprenorphine with naloxone was developed by NIDA and Reckitt Benckiser.

The buprenorphine/naloxone combination tablet appears to have reduced abuse potential compared with buprenorphine alone when studied in opioid-dependent populations. It works on the principle that naloxone is approximately 10–20 times more potent by injection than by the sublingual route. Therefore, if the combination is taken sublingually, as directed, the small amount of naloxone available should not interfere with the desired effects of buprenorphine. If the combination form is dissolved and injected by an individual physically dependent on opioids, however, the increased bioavailability of naloxone via the parenteral route should precipitate an opioid withdrawal syndrome.

## Summary and Overview of the Guidelines

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Buprenorphine as a medication, and the circumstances under which it can be used, together provide a new means to treat opioid addiction in the United States. Buprenorphine's usefulness stems from its unique pharmacological and safety profile, which encourages treatment adherence and reduces the possibilities for both abuse and overdose. Because buprenorphine has unusual pharmacological properties, physicians may want to consult with addiction specialists to understand more fully the partial opioid agonist effects of buprenorphine and how these properties are useful in opioid addiction treatment. Although buprenorphine offers special advantages to many patients, it is not for everyone. Care must be taken to assess each patient fully and to develop a realistic treatment plan for each patient accepted for buprenorphine treatment.

Chapter 2 provides additional information on the pharmacological properties of opioids in general and of buprenorphine in particular, along with safety considerations (especially drug interactions). Chapter 3 provides important screening guidelines and specific tools for initially assessing patients. Chapter 4 provides a step-by-step guide for initiating and maintaining treatment and developing a treatment plan. Chapter 5 provides guidelines on the use of



buprenorphine with special populations, including, for example, pregnant women, adolescents, individuals leaving controlled environments (e.g., prison), and healthcare professionals who are addicted. Chapter 6 provides important information on policies and procedures relevant to opioid addiction treatment under the DATA 2000 paradigm. References (see [appendix A](#)) are provided so that physicians can consult them to develop the best fit for each patient's treatment plan.

As of the date of this publication, Subutex® (buprenorphine) and Suboxone® (buprenorphine/naloxone) are the only forms of buprenorphine that have received FDA approval for use in opioid addiction treatment. Throughout the remainder of this document, use of the term *buprenorphine* will apply to both sublingual formulations of buprenorphine and to any similarly formulated generic products that may receive FDA approval in the future. When information is presented that is specific to either the buprenorphine monotherapy formulation or to the buprenorphine/naloxone combination, the specific designation will be employed, either by the trade name of the currently approved products (which will be meant to include any similar generic equivalents that may be approved in the future) or by the full formula designation.

The consensus panel notes that these guidelines represent one approach, but not necessarily the only approach, to the treatment of opioid addiction with buprenorphine. The panel considers these guidelines not as inflexible rules that must be applied in every instance, but rather as guidance to be considered in the evaluation and treatment of individual patients. Because each patient is unique, and because scientific knowledge and clinical best practices change over time, the application of these guidelines to the treatment of an individual patient must be informed by the needs of the patient, the changing body of scientific and clinical knowledge, and the clinical judgment of the physician.

### Footnotes

Due to a number of factors, including the association of LAAM with cardiac arrhythmias in some patients, as of January 1, 2004, the sole manufacturer has ceased production of the drug.

# TIP 40: 2 Pharmacology

## Overview

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Five topics related to the general pharmacology of opioids are reviewed in the first part of this chapter: (1) opioid receptors; (2) functions of opioids at receptors; (3) consequences of repeated administration and withdrawal of opioids; (4) the affinity, intrinsic activity, and dissociation of opioids from receptors; and (5) general characteristics of abused opioids. These topics are followed by a detailed review of the general and applied pharmacology of buprenorphine.

## General Opioid Pharmacology

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### Opioid Receptors

Opioid receptors are molecules on the surfaces of cells to which opioid compounds attach and through which they exert their effects. Different types of opioid receptors are present in the brain. The receptor most relevant to opioid abuse and treatment is the mu receptor. It is through activation of the mu receptor that opioids exert their analgesic, euphorogenic, and addictive effects. The roles of other types of opioid receptors in the brain (that is, non-mu opioid receptors) in the addictive process are not well defined.

### The Functions of Opioids at Receptors

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Opioids can interact with receptors in different ways. For purposes of this discussion, three types of drug/receptor interactions are described: agonists (or full agonists), antagonists, and partial agonists.

### Full Agonists

Drugs that activate receptors in the brain are termed agonists. Agonists bind to receptors and turn them on—they produce an effect in the organism. Full mu opioid agonists activate mu receptors. Increasing doses of full agonists produce increasing effects until a maximum effect is

reached or the receptor is fully activated. Opioids with the greatest abuse potential are full agonists (e.g., morphine, heroin, methadone, oxycodone, hydromorphone).

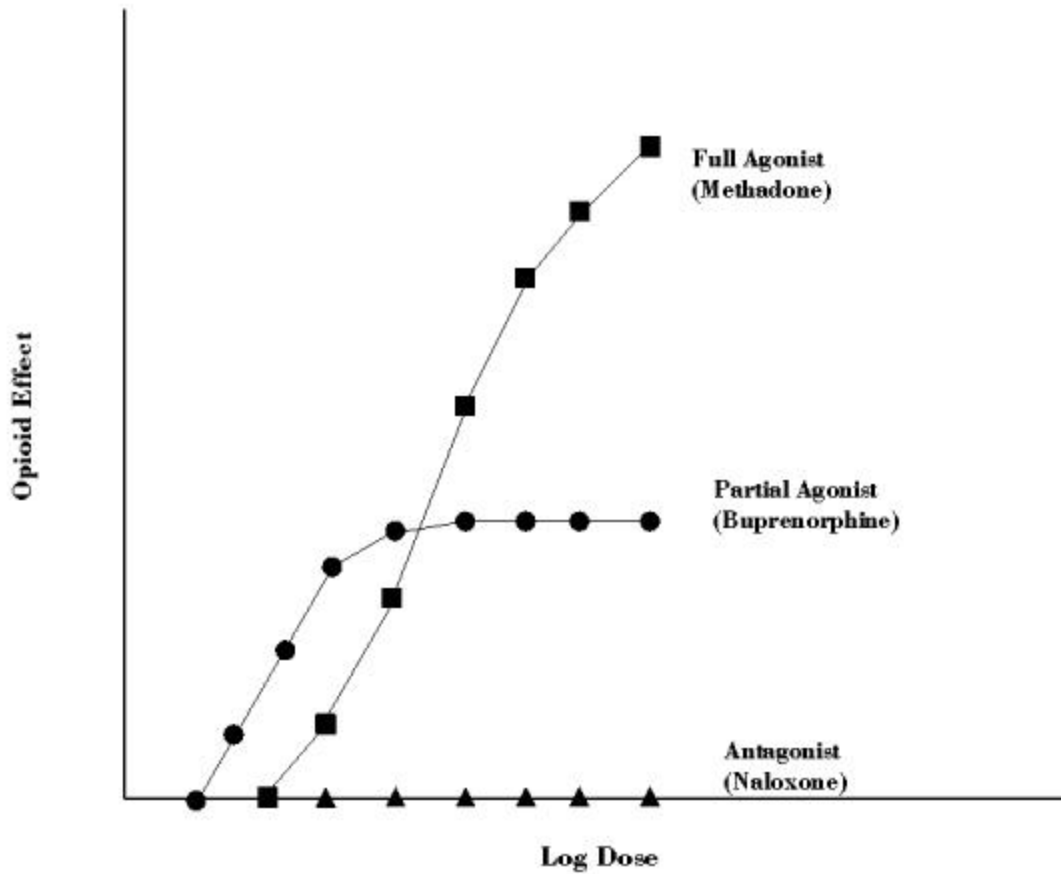
## Antagonists

Antagonists also bind to opioid receptors, but instead of activating receptors, they effectively block them. Antagonists do not activate receptors, and they prevent receptors from being activated by agonist compounds. An antagonist is like a key that fits in a lock but does not open it and prevents another key from being inserted to open the lock. Examples of opioid antagonists are naltrexone and naloxone.

## Partial Agonists



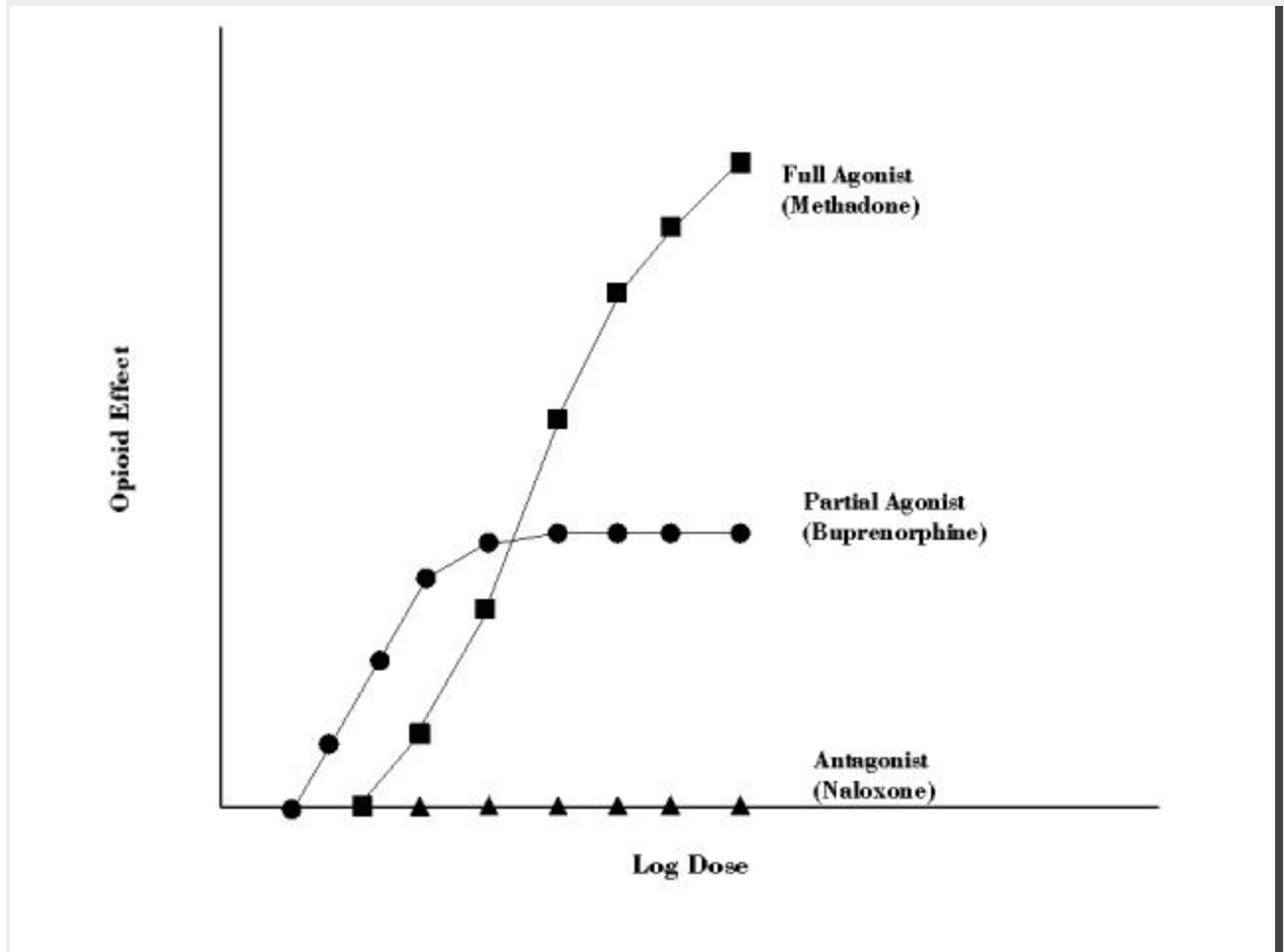
Figure 2-1. Conceptual Representation of Opioid Effect (more...)



**Figure 2-1. Conceptual Representation of Opioid Effect Versus Log Dose for Opioid Full Agonists, Partial Agonists, and Antagonists\***

\*Conceptual representation only, not to be used for dosing purposes.

Partial agonists possess some of the properties of both antagonists and full agonists. Partial agonists bind to receptors and activate them, but not to the same degree as do full agonists. At lower doses and in individuals who are not dependent on opioids, full agonists and partial agonists produce effects that are indistinguishable. As doses are increased, both full and partial agonists produce increasing effects. At a certain point, however, as illustrated in [figure 2-1](#)



, the increasing effects of partial agonists reach maximum levels and do not increase further, even if doses continue to rise—the *ceiling effect*. The figure represents any effect mediated by mu opioid receptors (e.g., analgesia, euphoria, respiratory depression). As higher doses are reached, partial agonists can act like antagonists—occupying receptors but not activating them (or only partially activating them), while at the same time displacing or blocking full agonists from receptors. Buprenorphine is an example of a mu opioid partial agonist, and its properties as such are discussed in detail below.

## Consequences of Repeated Administration and Withdrawal of Opioid Drugs

The repeated administration of a mu opioid agonist results in tolerance and dose-dependent physical dependence. *Tolerance* is characterized by a decreased subjective and objective

response to the same amount of opioids used over time or by the need to keep increasing the amount used to achieve the desired effect. In the case of abuse or addiction, the desired effect typically is euphoria. *Physical dependence* is manifested as a characteristic set of withdrawal signs and symptoms in response to reduction, cessation, or loss of the active compound at receptors (withdrawal syndrome).

Typical signs and symptoms of the *opioid withdrawal syndrome* include lacrimation, diarrhea, rhinorrhea, piloerection, yawning, cramps and aches, pupillary dilation, and sweating. Not all of these signs and symptoms are necessarily present in any single individual experiencing the opioid withdrawal syndrome. Withdrawal, characterized by marked distress, may include drug craving and drug seeking and is frequently associated with relapse to drug use in a patient with opioid addiction. In an individual who otherwise is in good general health (e.g., with no history of significant cardiovascular disease), opioid withdrawal is not life threatening. Patients with cardiovascular disease or other severe conditions will need comanagement involving the appropriate specialist, as well as consultation with an addiction specialist.

Two types of withdrawal are associated with mu opioid agonists: spontaneous withdrawal and precipitated withdrawal.

## **Spontaneous Withdrawal**

Spontaneous withdrawal can occur when an individual who is physically dependent on mu agonist opioids (e.g., has been using opioids on a daily basis) suddenly discontinues that opioid use. It also can occur if an individual who is physically dependent markedly decreases his or her daily opioid use.

In an individual who is physically dependent on heroin, spontaneous withdrawal usually begins 6–12 hours after the last dose and peaks in intensity 36–72 hours after the last use. The spontaneous withdrawal syndrome from heroin lasts approximately 5 days, although a milder, protracted withdrawal may last longer. Other short-acting opioids, such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, have kinetic profiles that are similar to heroin, and the time course of spontaneous

withdrawal for these agents should be similar to that documented for heroin. Opioids with longer half-lives have a longer period before the onset of spontaneous withdrawal (e.g., 24–72 hours for methadone) and a longer period before peak withdrawal is experienced.

## **Precipitated Withdrawal**

Precipitated withdrawal also occurs in individuals who are physically dependent on mu agonist opioids. Precipitated withdrawal usually occurs when an individual physically dependent on opioids is administered an opioid antagonist. In an individual who is not physically dependent upon opioids, the acute administration of an antagonist typically produces no effects. In an individual who is physically dependent on opioids, however, an antagonist produces a syndrome of withdrawal that is qualitatively similar to that seen with spontaneous withdrawal (although the onset is faster and the syndrome is shorter, depending on the half-life of the antagonist). One way to conceptualize precipitated withdrawal is that the antagonist displaces agonists from receptors, but because the antagonist does not activate the receptor, there is a net decrease in agonist effect, resulting in withdrawal.

It is also possible for partial agonists to precipitate withdrawal. If an individual who is physically dependent on opioids receives an acute dose of a partial agonist, the partial agonist can displace the full agonist from the receptors yet not activate the receptors as much as the full agonist had. The net effect would be a decrease in agonist effect and a precipitated withdrawal syndrome. Precipitated withdrawal with a partial agonist is more likely to occur in an individual who has a high level of physical dependence (e.g., high use of opioids each day), who takes the partial agonist soon after a dose of full agonist, and/or who takes a high dose of the partial agonist. These points, discussed in more detail below, are directly relevant to the initiation of buprenorphine treatment.

## **Affinity, Intrinsic Activity, and Dissociation**

The strength with which a drug binds to its receptor is termed its *affinity*. The degree to which a drug activates its receptors is termed its *intrinsic activity*. Affinity for a receptor and activation of

the receptor are two different qualities of a drug. A drug can have high affinity for a receptor but not activate the receptor (e.g., an antagonist). Mu opioid agonists, partial agonists, and antagonists can vary in their affinity.

In addition to variations in affinity and intrinsic activity, drugs also vary in their rate of *dissociation* from receptors. Dissociation is a measure of the disengagement or uncoupling of the drug from the receptor. Dissociation is not the same as affinity—a drug can have high affinity for a receptor (it is difficult to displace it from the receptor with another drug once the first drug is present), but it still dissociates or uncouples from the receptor with some regularity.

Buprenorphine's slow dissociation contributes to its long duration of action.

## Characteristics of Abused Drugs

The rate of onset of the pharmacological effects of a drug, and thereby its abuse potential, is determined by a number of factors. Important among these are the drug's route of administration, its half-life, and its lipophilicity (which determines how fast the drug reaches the brain). A faster route of drug administration (e.g., injection, smoking), a shorter half-life, and a faster onset of action all are associated with a higher abuse potential of a drug. With all classes of drugs of abuse, it has been shown that the likelihood of abuse is related to the ease of administration, the cost of the drug, and how fast the user experiences the desired results after the drug's administration. In this respect, heroin is highly abusable, as it currently is inexpensive; can be snorted, smoked, or injected; and produces a rapid euphorogenic response.

## Pharmacology of Buprenorphine

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### Overview

Buprenorphine is a thebaine derivative that is legally classified as a narcotic. It is available in numerous countries for use as an analgesic. When used as an analgesic, buprenorphine is usually given by injection, via a sublingual tablet, or as a transdermal patch, and doses are relatively low (compared with doses used in the treatment of opioid addiction). The typical



analgesic dose of buprenorphine is 0.3–0.6 mg (intramuscular or intravenous), and its analgesic effects last about 6 hours.

Buprenorphine is a partial agonist that exerts significant actions at the mu opioid receptor. As reviewed in the previous section, however, its maximal opioid effects are less than that of full agonists, and reach a *ceiling* where higher doses do not result in increasing effect. Because it is a partial agonist, higher doses of buprenorphine can be given with fewer adverse effects (e.g., respiratory depression) than are seen with higher doses of full agonist opioids. Past a certain point, dose increases of buprenorphine do not further increase the pharmacological effects of the drug but do increase its duration of withdrawal suppression and opioid blockade.

At low doses, buprenorphine is many times more potent than morphine. Individuals who are not dependent on opioids but who are familiar with the effects of opioids experience a subjectively positive opioid effect when they receive an acute dose of buprenorphine. These subjective effects aid in maintaining compliance with buprenorphine dosing in patients who are addicted to opioids.

## Affinity, Intrinsic Activity, and Dissociation

Buprenorphine has high affinity for, but low intrinsic activity at, mu receptors. Buprenorphine displaces morphine, methadone, and other full opioid agonists from receptors. It also can block the effects of other opioids ([Bickel et al. 1988b](#); [Rosen et al. 1994](#); [Strain et al. 2002](#)). Because of buprenorphine's higher affinity for the mu receptor, full agonists cannot displace it and therefore will not exert an opioid effect on receptors already occupied by buprenorphine. This effect is dose related, as shown by [Comer et al. \(2001\)](#) in a study demonstrating that the 16-mg dose of the sublingual buprenorphine-alone tablet was more effective than the 8-mg dose in blocking the reinforcing effects of heroin. Similarly, it is difficult for opioid antagonists (e.g., naloxone) to displace buprenorphine and precipitate withdrawal.

Buprenorphine has a slow dissociation rate from the mu opioid receptor, which gives rise to its prolonged suppression of opioid withdrawal and blockade of exogenous opioids. This enables buprenorphine dosing to occur on a less frequent basis than full opioid agonists ([Amass et al.](#)

1994a,b, 1998, 2000 2001). Buprenorphine can be given as infrequently as three times per week (Amass et al. 2001; Perez de los Cobos et al. 2000; Schottenfeld et al. 2000). Buprenorphine’s effectiveness as a medication for the treatment of opioid addiction on a daily or less-than-daily basis contrasts with its relatively short duration of action as an analgesic.

## Bioavailability

Buprenorphine has poor gastrointestinal (GI) bioavailability (Brewster et al. 1981; Walter and Inturrisi 1995), and fair sublingual bioavailability. (See figure 2-2.) FDA-approved formulations of the drug for treatment of opioid addiction are in the form of sublingual tablets that are held under the tongue and absorbed through the sublingual mucosa. Studies of sublingually administered buprenorphine have employed either an alcohol-based solution or a tablet formulation of the drug. Confusion may result when reviewing the literature on the effectiveness of buprenorphine at various doses because most early trials and clinical studies of buprenorphine were performed with a sublingually administered liquid preparation, whereas the oral formulations marketed in the United States are sublingual tablets. Studies have shown that the bioavailability of buprenorphine in sublingual tablet form is significantly less than via sublingual liquid solution—about 50–70 percent that of the liquid form (Nath et al. 1999; Schuh and Johanson 1999), so the dosages of buprenorphine sublingual tablets must be significantly higher than those used in the liquid form to achieve the same therapeutic effect.

### Bioavailability of Buprenorphine

<b>Route of Administration</b>	<b>Buprenorphine Bioavailability Relative to Intravenous Route of Administration</b>	<b>Buprenorphine Bioavailability Relative to Intramuscular Route of Administration</b>	<b>Buprenorphine Bioavailability Relative to Sublingual Solution Route of Administration</b>

<b>Route of Administration</b>	<b>Buprenorphine Bioavailability Relative to Intravenous Route of Administration</b>	<b>Buprenorphine Bioavailability Relative to Intramuscular Route of Administration</b>	<b>Buprenorphine Bioavailability Relative to Sublingual Solution Route of Administration</b>
Intravenous	100%	—	—
Intramuscular	70%	100%	—
Sublingual Solution	49%	70%	100%
Sublingual Tablet	29%	42%	50–70%

*Sources:* Brewster et al. 1981; Kuhlman et al. 1996; Lloyd-Jones et al. 1980; Nath 1999; Schuh and Johanson 1999; Strain and Stitzer 1999; Weinberg et al. 1988

## Abuse Potential

Epidemiological studies and human laboratory studies indicate that buprenorphine is abusable. This is consistent with its action at the mu opioid receptor. The abuse potential, however, is lower in comparison with the abuse potential of full opioid agonists. This is consistent with buprenorphine's partial agonist effects and the resultant ceiling in maximal effects produced. Still, abuse of the analgesic form of buprenorphine through diversion to the injectable route has been reported internationally:

- England ([Strang 1985](#))

- Ireland ([O'Connor et al. 1988](#))
- Scotland ([Gray et al. 1989](#); [Morrison 1989](#); [Sakol et al. 1989](#))
- India ([Chowdhury and Chowdhury 1990](#); [Singh et al. 1992](#))
- New Zealand ([Robinson et al. 1993](#))

Abuse of buprenorphine has been reported to occur via the sublingual and intranasal routes but primarily via diversion of sublingual tablets to the injection route. In a study from France ([Obadia et al. 2001](#)), sublingual, buprenorphine-only tablets (Subutex®), marketed for the treatment of opioid addiction, were diverted to the injection route.

Laboratory studies with inpatient subjects have examined the effects of buprenorphine relevant to abuse potential in two populations: (1) subjects who have a history of opioid abuse but are not physically dependent on opioids, and (2) subjects who are physically dependent on opioids.

### **Abuse Potential in Nonphysically Dependent Opioid Users**

In nonphysically dependent opioid users, acute parenteral doses of buprenorphine produce typical mu agonist opioid effects (e.g., pupillary constriction, mild euphoria), suggesting that this population could abuse buprenorphine ([Jasinski et al. 1978, 1989](#); [Pickworth et al. 1993](#)). Similar effects can occur in this population when buprenorphine is administered via other routes, including the sublingual route ([Jasinski et al. 1989](#); [Johnson et al. 1989](#); [Walsh et al. 1994](#)). [Strain et al. \(2000\)](#) recently reconfirmed the opioid-like effects of sublingually administered buprenorphine in this population. These researchers further found that, in nondependent subjects, the addition of naloxone (in the buprenorphine/naloxone combination tablet) did not attenuate buprenorphine's opioid effects via the sublingual route. The onset of effects via the sublingual route is slower than that seen with parenteral administration, suggesting that the abuse potential by this route is lower than via the parenteral route.

### **Abuse Potential in Physically Dependent Opioid Users**

The abuse potential of buprenorphine in individuals who are physically dependent on opioids varies as a function of three factors: (1) level of physical dependence, (2) time interval between

administration of the full agonist and of buprenorphine, and (3) the dose of buprenorphine administered.

*Level of Physical Dependence.* In individuals with a high level of physical dependence (e.g., those using substantial amounts of opioids on a daily basis), buprenorphine may precipitate withdrawal when taken during the time of opioid intoxication or receptor occupancy. The relationship between level of physical dependence and buprenorphine-related precipitated withdrawal has been investigated primarily in subjects maintained on methadone. For example, patients maintained on 60 mg of methadone daily can experience precipitated withdrawal from acute doses of sublingual buprenorphine ([Walsh et al. 1995](#)). Conversely, in individuals with a low level of physical dependence (e.g., patients maintained on <30 mg per day of methadone), buprenorphine could produce opioid agonist effects, thus suggesting a potential for abuse.

*Time Interval.* The abuse potential of buprenorphine in opioid-dependent individuals also varies as a function of the time interval between the dose of agonist and the dose of buprenorphine. At relatively short time intervals (e.g., 2 hours after a dose of methadone), buprenorphine can precipitate withdrawal—even when the level of physical dependence is relatively low ([Strain et al. 1995](#)). At longer time intervals, it becomes more likely that buprenorphine will exhibit either no effects (i.e., similar to placebo [[Strain et al. 1992](#)]) or effects similar to opioid agonists.

*Acute Dose of Buprenorphine.* Finally, the dose of buprenorphine administered also can influence its abuse potential. Low doses of injected buprenorphine (e.g.,  $\leq 2$  mg) produce minimal effects in opioid-dependent patients and are primarily identified as similar to placebo ([Strain et al. 1992](#)) although there has been at least one report of more precipitated abstinence ([Banys et al. 1994](#)).

Higher doses can be identified as opioid agonist-like, especially as the time interval since the dose of agonist increases (e.g., 24 or more hours) and if the individual has a lower level of physical dependence (e.g., 30 mg per day of methadone or the equivalent).

Although buprenorphine can precipitate withdrawal under certain circumstances, it is worth noting that it does not usually produce severe precipitated withdrawal symptoms.

## Potential for Physical Dependence

Repeated administration of buprenorphine produces or maintains opioid physical dependence; however, because buprenorphine is a partial agonist, the level of physical dependence appears to be less than that produced by full agonists ([Eissenberg et al. 1996](#)). Furthermore, the withdrawal syndrome associated with buprenorphine discontinuation may be significantly milder in intensity, and the onset of withdrawal signs and symptoms slower, than that seen with full mu agonists ([Eissenberg et al. 1997](#); [Jasinski et al. 1978](#); [Mello et al. 1982](#); [San et al. 1992](#)). The reason for the slower onset of withdrawal symptoms is not completely understood but is likely related to buprenorphine's slow dissociation from the mu receptor. Gradual dose reduction of buprenorphine results in an even milder withdrawal syndrome.

## Metabolism and Excretion

A high percentage of buprenorphine is bound to plasma protein and is metabolized in the liver by the cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme system into norbuprenorphine and other products ([Iribarne et al. 1997](#); [Kobayashi et al. 1998](#)). First-pass effects account for its relatively low GI bioavailability and its short plasma half-life. (See the buprenorphine package inserts for a more detailed explanation of its metabolism and excretion.)

## Side Effects

The primary side effects of buprenorphine are similar to other mu opioid agonists (e.g., nausea, vomiting, constipation), but the intensity of these side effects may be less than that produced by full agonist opioids.

## Buprenorphine Safety, Adverse Reactions, and Drug Interactions

### Accidental Ingestion and Overdose

Because of buprenorphine's poor GI bioavailability, swallowing the tablets will result in a milder effect compared with administering them sublingually. (By extrapolation, buprenorphine tablets

are approximately one-fifth as potent when swallowed versus when taken sublingually.)

Buprenorphine's ceiling effect also adds to its safety in accidental or intentional overdose.

Preclinical studies suggest that high acute doses of buprenorphine (analogous to an overdose) produce no significant respiratory depression or other life-threatening sequelae (e.g., circulatory collapse). Overdose of buprenorphine combined with other medications, however, may increase morbidity and mortality, as described further below.

## Respiratory Depression

In contrast to full mu agonists, overdose of buprenorphine (by itself) does not appear to cause lethal respiratory depression in noncompromised individuals. Consistent with this clinical observation, a preclinical study of buprenorphine showed initial dose-related increases in pCO<sub>2</sub> (arterial carbon dioxide level) followed by decreases in pCO<sub>2</sub> compatible with buprenorphine's bell-shaped dose-response curve ([Cowan et al. 1977](#)). However, although none of the outpatient clinical trials comparing buprenorphine to methadone or placebo reported adverse events of respiratory depression, some cases have been reported of respiratory depression induced by buprenorphine in individuals not physically dependent on opioids ([Gal 1989](#); [Thörn et al. 1988](#)). In addition, buprenorphine, in combination with other sedative drugs, has been reported to produce respiratory depression. (See "Drug Interactions" below.)

## Cognitive and Psychomotor Effects

Available evidence in patients maintained on buprenorphine indicates no clinically significant disruption in cognitive and psychomotor performance ([Walsh et al. 1994](#)).

## Hepatic Effects

Elevation in liver enzymes (AST and ALT) has been reported in individuals receiving buprenorphine ([Lange et al. 1990](#); [Petry et al. 2000](#)). There also appears to be a possible association between intravenous buprenorphine misuse and liver toxicity ([Berson et al. 2001](#)).

See Johnson et al. (2003b) for further details. Mild elevations in liver enzymes have been noted in patients with hepatitis who received long-term buprenorphine dosing ([Petry et al. 2000](#)).

## Perinatal Effects

There is limited clinical experience with buprenorphine maintenance in pregnant women who are addicted to opioids. The literature in this area is limited to case reports, prospective studies, and open-labeled controlled studies; however, no randomized controlled studies have been reported ([Johnson et al. 2003b](#)). See “Pregnant Women and Neonates” in chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the available clinical and research evidence.

## Buprenorphine-Induced Precipitated Withdrawal

Administration of buprenorphine can precipitate an opioid withdrawal syndrome. Although there is much

variability in response to buprenorphine, precipitated withdrawal symptoms tend to be milder than those produced by antagonist-precipitated withdrawal, and intervention is rarely required. In controlled studies in which buprenorphine was given to individuals who were physically dependent on opioids, the precipitated withdrawal syndrome was both mild in intensity and easily tolerated ([Strain et al. 1995](#)). However, at least one open-label small-sample trial of low-dose buprenorphine caused a patient to experience pronounced, precipitated, and poorly tolerated withdrawal of severe intensity ([Banys et al. 1994](#)). The probability of precipitating a withdrawal syndrome is minimized by reducing the dose of mu agonist before buprenorphine treatment is initiated, by allowing a longer elapsed interval between last agonist dose and first buprenorphine dose, and by starting treatment with a lower buprenorphine dose.

## Drug Interactions

### **Benzodiazepines and Other Sedative Drugs**



There have been case reports of deaths apparently associated with injections of buprenorphine combined with benzodiazepines and/or other central nervous system (CNS) depressants (e.g., alcohol) ([Reynaud et al. 1998a,b](#)). [Gaulier et al. \(2000\)](#) reported a case of fatal overdose in which buprenorphine and its metabolites, as well as the metabolites of flunitrazepam, were very high at the time of death. Although it is not known if this is a pharmacodynamic interaction, [Ibrahim et al. \(2000\)](#) and [Kilicarslan and Sellers \(2000\)](#) suggest that, because of buprenorphine's weak ability to inhibit the cytochrome P450 3A4 system, the effect is more likely pharmacodynamic. This interaction, however, underscores the importance for physicians to be cautious in prescribing buprenorphine in conjunction with benzodiazepines, as well as in prescribing buprenorphine to patients who are addicted to opioids and also are abusing or are addicted to benzodiazepines. It is prudent to assume that these cautions also should be applied to buprenorphine combined with other CNS depressants, including alcohol and barbiturates.

## **Opioid Antagonists**

Buprenorphine treatment should not be combined with opioid antagonists (e.g., naltrexone). It is common for individuals who are addicted to opioids to be concurrently dependent on alcohol. Although naltrexone may decrease the likelihood of relapse to drinking, patients maintained on opioids should not be given naltrexone to prevent alcohol relapse since the naltrexone can precipitate an opioid withdrawal syndrome in buprenorphine-maintained patients. Thus, physicians should not prescribe naltrexone for patients being treated with buprenorphine for opioid addiction.

## **Medications Metabolized by Cytochrome P450 3A4**

Buprenorphine is metabolized by the cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme system. Other medications that interact with this enzyme system should be used with caution in patients taking buprenorphine. No controlled studies, however, have examined these pharmacokinetic interactions. Figure 2-3 lists some of the drugs known to be metabolized by cytochrome P450 3A4. In some cases, these drugs may either enhance or decrease buprenorphine's effects through actions on the cytochrome P450 3A4 system.:

**Partial List of Medications Metabolized by Cytochrome P450 3A4**

<b>Inhibitors (potentially increasing blood levels of buprenorphine)</b>	<b>Substrates</b>		<b>Inducers (potentially decreasing blood levels of buprenorphine)</b>
Amiodarone	Alprazolam	Loratadine	Carbamazepine
Clarithromycin	Amlodipine	Losartan	Dexamethasone
Delavirdine	Astemizole	Lovastatin	Efavirenz
Erythromycin	Atorvastatin	Miconazole	Ethosuximide
Fluconazole	Carbamazepine	Midazolam	Nevirapine
Fluoxetine	Cisapride	Navelbine	Phenobarbital
Fluvoxamine	Clindamycin	Nefazadone	Phenytoin
Grapefruit Juice	Clonazepam	Nelfinavir	Primadone
Indinavir	Cyclobenzaprine	Nicardipine	Rifampin
Itraconazole	Cyclosporine	Nifedipine	
Ketoconazole	Dapsone	Nimodipine	
Metronidazole	Delavirdine	Ondansetron	
Miconazole	Dexamethasone	Oral	
Nefazadone	Diazepam	Contraceptives	
Nelfinavir	Diltiazem	Paclitaxel	
Nicardipine	Disopyramide	Prednisone	
Norfloxacin	Doxorubicin	Progestins	
Omeprazole	Erythromycin	Quinidine	
Paroxetine	Estrogens	Rifampin	
Ritonavir	Etoposide	Ritonavir	
Saquinavir	Felodipine	R-Warfarin	
Sertraline	Fentanyl	Saquinavir	

<b>Inhibitors (potentially increasing blood levels of buprenorphine)</b>	<b>Substrates</b>		<b>Inducers (potentially decreasing blood levels of buprenorphine)</b>
Verapamil Zafirlukast Zileuton	Fexofenadine Glyburide Ifosfamide Indinavir Ketoconazole Lansoprazole Lidocaine	Sertraline Simvastatin Tacrolimus Tamoxifen Verapamil Vinblastine Zileuton	

For a continuously updated list of cytochrome P450 3A4 drug interactions, visit <http://medicine.iupui.edu/flockhart/table.htm>.

## **Opioid Agonists**

Clinical situations may arise in which a full agonist may be required for patients who currently are being treated with buprenorphine, such as in the treatment of acute pain. Although this medication interaction has not been studied systematically, the pharmacological characteristics of buprenorphine suggest that it may be difficult to obtain adequate analgesia with full agonists in patients stabilized on maintenance buprenorphine.

Data nonspecific to buprenorphine suggest that, in patients maintained chronically on methadone, the acute administration of full mu agonists for analgesia can be effective. If the necessity should arise for the use of a full mu agonist for pain relief in a patient maintained on buprenorphine, the buprenorphine should be discontinued until the pain can be controlled without the use of opioid pain medications. It must be recognized that treatment with full mu agonists for pain relief will produce increased opioid tolerance and a higher degree of physical

dependence. See “Patients With Pain” in chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the treatment of pain in patients maintained on buprenorphine.

## Effectiveness of Buprenorphine Treatment

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Buprenorphine can be used for either longterm maintenance or for medically supervised withdrawal (detoxification) from opioids. The preponderance of research evidence and clinical experience, however, indicates that opioid maintenance treatments have a much higher likelihood of long-term success than do any forms of withdrawal treatment. In any event, the immediate goals in starting buprenorphine should be stabilization of the patient and abstinence from illicit opioids, rather than any arbitrary or predetermined schedule of withdrawal from the prescribed medication.

### Maintenance Treatment

A number of clinical trials have established the effectiveness of buprenorphine for the maintenance treatment of opioid addiction. These have included studies that compared buprenorphine to placebo ([Johnson et al. 1995](#); [Ling et al. 1998](#); [Fudala et al. 2003](#)), as well as comparisons to methadone (e.g., ([Johnson et al. 1992](#); [Ling et al. 1996](#); [Pani et al. 2000](#); [Petitjean et al. 2001](#); [Schottenfeld et al. 1997](#); [Strain et al. 1994a,b](#)) and to

methadone and levo-alpha-acetyl-methadol (LAAM) ([Johnson et al. 2000](#)). Results from these studies suggest that buprenorphine in a dose range of 8–16 mg a day sublingually is as clinically effective as approximately 60 mg a day of oral methadone, although it is unlikely to be as effective as full therapeutic doses of methadone (e.g., 120 mg per day) in patients requiring higher levels of full agonist activity for effective treatment.

A meta-analysis comparing buprenorphine to methadone ([Barnett et al. 2001](#)) concluded that buprenorphine was more effective than 20–35 mg of methadone but did not have as robust an effect as 50–80 mg methadone—much the same effects as the individual studies have concluded.

Buprenorphine's partial mu agonist properties make it mildly reinforcing, thus encouraging patient compliance with regular administration. This is in contrast to medications such as naltrexone, which also blocks the effects of opioid agonists but lacks any agonist effects. Because a medication such as naltrexone is not reinforcing, adherence in therapeutic use is poor. Naltrexone also may increase the risk for overdose death in the event of relapse following its discontinuation.

## Medically Supervised Withdrawal

Although controlled clinical studies of the use of buprenorphine as an agent for treating opioid withdrawal (detoxification) are scarce, some clinical research on its use for this indication has been conducted ([Parran et al. 1994](#)). In general, buprenorphine has been used in three ways for withdrawal from opioids: long-period withdrawal (>30 days), usually on an outpatient basis; moderate-period withdrawal (>3 days but <30 days), again on an outpatient basis; and short-period withdrawal (<3 days), which often has been conducted on an inpatient basis. The available evidence from buprenorphine and methadone research suggests that long-period buprenorphine withdrawal probably would be more effective than moderate- or short-period withdrawals but that all forms of withdrawal are less effective compared with ongoing opioid maintenance ([Amass et al. 1994a,b](#); [Sees et al. 2000](#)).

*Long-Period Withdrawal.* Although few data are available on the use of buprenorphine for gradual withdrawal over a period of months, the literature on opioid withdrawal can be used to guide recommendations in this regard. This literature suggests that using buprenorphine for gradual detoxification is more effective than its use for rapid detoxification in terms of patient compliance and relapse to opioid use. These findings are analogous to those seen with methadone which show that patients undergoing a 10-week methadone dose reduction (i.e., 10 percent per week) had a higher rate of opioid-positive urine samples than those receiving a 30-week dose reduction (i.e., 3 percent per week) and asked for more schedule interruptions ([Senay et al. 1977](#)).

*Moderate-Period Withdrawal.* Few studies of withdrawal from illicit opioids have been conducted using buprenorphine for moderate periods (>3 days, but <30 days). Moderate-period withdrawal

using buprenorphine suppresses signs and symptoms of withdrawal, is tolerated by patients, and is safe. For example, a study comparing 10 days of buprenorphine versus clonidine for the inpatient treatment of opioid withdrawal found buprenorphine superior to clonidine in relieving withdrawal signs and symptoms ([Nigam et al. 1993](#)). Outcomes with moderate-period withdrawal, however, are unlikely to be as positive as those seen with long-period withdrawal ([Amass et al. 1994a,b](#)).

*Short-Period Withdrawal.* The liquid form of buprenorphine has been studied for the withdrawal from opioids over short periods (e.g., 3 days) ([Armenian et al. 1999](#)). In these studies, the doses of buprenorphine administered were low (compared to maintenance doses) and typically were administered two or three times per day, either by injection or by having the patient hold the liquid under his or her tongue. (Note that this off-label use of the liquid form of buprenorphine is unlawful outside an approved study setting and is now unnecessary due to the FDA approval of Subutex® and Suboxone®.)

Reports have indicated that buprenorphine is well accepted by patients for short-period withdrawal and that opioid withdrawal signs and symptoms are suppressed ([DiPaula et al. 2002](#); [Bickel et al. 1988a](#)). When compared with clonidine for the treatment of short-period withdrawal, buprenorphine is better accepted by patients and more effective in relieving withdrawal symptoms ([Cheskin et al. 1994](#)). Long-term outcomes from short-period opioid withdrawal using buprenorphine have not been reported, however, and studies of other withdrawal modalities have shown that brief withdrawal periods do not produce measurable long-term benefits ([Simpson and Sells 1989](#)); patients usually relapse to opioid use.

## The Buprenorphine/Naloxone Combination

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There have been reports from several countries of abuse of buprenorphine by injection. Because of this buprenorphine abuse, a sublingual tablet form containing naloxone has been developed for the U.S. market to decrease the potential for abuse of the combination product via the injection route. Sublingual naloxone has relatively low bioavailability ([Preston et al. 1990](#)), while sublingual buprenorphine has good bioavailability. (Both naloxone and buprenorphine have poor

GI bioavailability.) Thus, if a tablet containing buprenorphine plus naloxone is taken as directed—sublingually—the patient will experience a predominant buprenorphine effect. However, if an opioid-dependent individual dissolves and injects the combination tablet, then the antagonistic effect of naloxone predominates because of its high parenteral bioavailability ([Stoller et al. 2001](#)). Under such circumstances, the individual should experience a precipitated withdrawal syndrome. This should decrease the likelihood of misuse and abuse of the combination tablet by the injection route.

The safety and efficacy profile of sublingual buprenorphine/naloxone appears to be equivalent to that of buprenorphine alone ([Harris et al. 2000](#)). Currently, no special safety or side-effect considerations exist for the combination formulation, but it is not recommended for use in pregnant women. If buprenorphine treatment is elected for a pregnant woman, the monotherapy product should be used. (See “Pregnant Women and Neonates” in chapter 5.)

## Diversion and Misuse of Either Buprenorphine Alone or the Buprenorphine/Naloxone Combination Product

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As with any prescription opioid, physicians prescribing or dispensing buprenorphine or the buprenorphine/naloxone combination should monitor patients for diversion of these medications. As noted above, naloxone is combined with buprenorphine to decrease the potential for abuse of the combination via injection. Four types of individuals might attempt to abuse buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone tablets parenterally:

1. *Those using diverted tablets who are physically dependent on illicit opioids (e.g., heroin).* Parenteral use of the combination buprenorphine/naloxone tablet by these individuals would result in precipitated withdrawal more reliably than injection of buprenorphine alone.
2. *Those using diverted tablets who are taking therapeutic full agonist opioids (e.g., oxycodone, methadone).* Parenteral use of the combination buprenorphine/naloxone tablet by these individuals also would result in a

precipitated withdrawal syndrome more reliably than injection of buprenorphine alone.

3. *Those receiving prescription buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone tablets who dissolve and inject their own medication.* This population would experience an agonist effect from buprenorphine but no antagonist effect from naloxone, as large doses of opioid antagonists are needed to precipitate withdrawal in buprenorphine-maintained subjects ([Eissenberg et al. 1996](#)). Although some of the agonist effects of buprenorphine may be attenuated by the simultaneous injection of naloxone, acute agonist effects will still be experienced whether the combination or the monotherapy product is injected.
4. *Those who abuse opioids but who are not physically dependent on them.* In this group, neither naloxone nor buprenorphine will produce precipitated withdrawal. Sublingual or injected use of either buprenorphine product will produce opioid agonist effects; however, the euphoric effects would be mild.

## Summary

An understanding of both the general pharmacology of opioids and the specific pharmacological properties of buprenorphine is essential for physicians who intend to treat opioid addiction with buprenorphine. Buprenorphine has unique qualities that make it an effective and safe addition to the available pharmacological treatments for opioid addiction. The combination of buprenorphine with the opioid antagonist naloxone further increases its safety and decreases—but does not eliminate—the likelihood of diversion and misuse.

### Footnotes

It is important to understand that in vitro findings may not be predictive of what occurs in humans, underscoring the need for clinicians to monitor patients for potential drug interactions and associated adverse events.



# TIP 40: 3 Patient Assessment

## Overview

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This chapter presents guidance on screening for the presence of opioid use disorders and for the further assessment of patients in whom screening indicates the potential presence of a problem. Guidelines are provided for determining when buprenorphine is an appropriate treatment option for patients who have an opioid addiction. Additional information about many of the topics discussed in this chapter can be found in [appendix E](#).

## Screening and Assessment of Opioid Use Disorders

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### Screening

The consensus panel that developed the *Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction* recommends that physicians periodically and regularly screen *all* patients for substance use and substance-related problems, not just those patients who fit the stereotypical picture of addiction. Although addiction to drugs and alcohol is common, currently fewer than one-third of physicians in the United States carefully screen for addiction ([National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse 2000](#)).

Conducting ongoing, regular substance abuse screening as part of medical care facilitates the early identification, intervention, and treatment of addiction. Periodic assessments for abuse, addiction, or other adverse effects are particularly helpful when the primary care physician or specialist is prescribing opioids for the treatment of pain. Office-based physicians may conduct further assessment and provide primary opioid addiction treatment for those patients who are determined to be appropriate candidates for office-based treatment. Alternatively, when indicated, patients may be referred for treatment in another setting.

### Goals of Screening

The goals of addiction screening and assessment are to

- Identify individuals who are at risk for developing drug- or alcohol-related problems
- Identify individuals who may have developed drug- or alcohol-related problems or addiction
- Identify individuals who require further medical or addiction assessment
- Diagnose addiction or other substance-related disorders
- Develop recommendations and plan for appropriate addiction treatment
- Assess the biopsychosocial needs of patients with addictions

## Initial Screening

Initial screening should consist of a combination of objective screening instruments, laboratory evaluations, and interview(s). If the physician suspects an addiction problem after reviewing the initial results, further assessment is indicated. In-depth interviews and standardized assessments are the most effective means of gathering further information.

Several validated addiction screening instruments are available. In addition, many physicians develop their own set of screening questions for medical illnesses. Screening questionnaires may be given to all patients in a physician's practice, not just to those patients considered to be "at risk" for drug or alcohol problems.

Examples of addiction screening instruments include

- Drugs:
  - COWS (Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale) (Wesson et al. 1999)
  - SOWS (Subjective Opiate Withdrawal Scale) (Bradley et al. 1987; Gossop 1990; Handelsman et al. 1987)
  - DAST-10 (Drug Abuse Screening Test) (Skinner 1982)
  - CINA (Clinical Institute Narcotic Assessment Scale for Withdrawal Symptoms) (Peachey and Lei 1988)
  - CAGE-AID (CAGE Adapted to Include Drugs) (Brown and Rounds 1995)

- Narcotic Withdrawal Scale (Fultz and Senay 1975)
- Alcohol:
  - CAGE (Maisto and Saitz 2003)
  - AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test) (Babor et al. 2001)
  - MAST (Michigan Alcohol Screening Test) (Selzer 1971)
  - SMAST (Short Michigan Alcohol Screening Test) (Selzer et al. 1975)

For more information about such tools, see appendix B. The reader also can review the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) TIP 24, *A Guide to Substance Abuse Services for Primary Care Clinicians* (CSAT 1997). See <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm>.

## Assessment

If screening indicates the presence of an opioid use disorder, further assessment is indicated to thoroughly delineate the patient's problem, to identify comorbid or complicating medical or emotional conditions, and to determine the appropriate treatment setting and level of treatment intensity for the patient. To determine the appropriateness of office-based or other opioid agonist treatment, a comprehensive patient assessment is essential. The assessment may be accomplished in stages over a 3- to 4-week period, during initiation of treatment and gradual acquisition of increasingly detailed information. Several office visits may be required to obtain all the information necessary to make a comprehensive set of diagnoses and to develop an appropriate treatment plan, although these efforts also can be completed in a single, extended visit if so desired. Treatment should not be delayed, however, pending complete patient assessment.

### Goals of Assessment

The goals of the medical assessment of a patient who is addicted to opioids are to

- Establish the diagnosis or diagnoses
- Determine appropriateness for treatment

- Make initial treatment recommendations
- Formulate an initial treatment plan
- Plan for engagement in psychosocial treatment
- Ensure that there are no contraindications to the recommended treatments
- Assess other medical problems or conditions that need to be addressed during early treatment
- Assess other psychiatric or psychosocial problems that need to be addressed during early treatment

## **Components of Assessment**

The components of the assessment of a patient who is addicted to opioids should include

- Complete history
- Physical examination
- Mental status examination
- Relevant laboratory testing
- Formal psychiatric assessment (if indicated)

In forming a framework for assessment, physicians may include questions and evaluations pertinent to the most recent edition of the American Society of Addiction Medicine Patient Placement Criteria (ASAM PPC) and the categories of the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) (McLellan et al. 1992; Mee-Lee 2001). The ASAM PPC may be ordered from ASAM at <http://www.asam.org>. The full text of the ASI can be downloaded from the Treatment Research Institute Web site at <http://www.tresearch.org>.

## **Complete History Taking—Interviewing Patients Who Are Addicted**

*Attitude of the Physician.* The approach and attitude the physician shows to patients who have an addiction are of paramount importance. Patients are often hesitant or reluctant to disclose their drug use or problems. Patients who are addicted report discomfort, shame, fear, distrust,

hopelessness, and the desire to continue using drugs as reasons they do not discuss addiction openly with their physicians (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse 2000). Patients in treatment for pain may fear the loss of their opioid pain medications should they disclose to a physician their concerns about their possible addiction. Physicians need to approach patients who have an addiction in an honest, respectful, matter-of-fact way, just as they would approach patients with any other medical illness or problem. A physician's responsibility is to deal appropriately with his or her own attitudes and emotional reactions to a patient. For evaluation to be effective, personal biases and opinions about drug use, individuals who have addictions, sexual behavior, lifestyle differences, and other emotionally laden issues must be set aside or dealt with openly and therapeutically.

Certain characteristics of treatment providers facilitate effective evaluation and treatment of addiction, and these characteristics should be cultivated by physicians who plan to treat patients who have addictions (CSAT 1999b; Miller et al. 1993; Najavits and Weiss 1994). These attributes are listed in figure 3-1.

**Figure 3-1 Attributes of an Effective Addiction Treatment Provider**

- Ability to establish a helping alliance
- Good interpersonal skills
- Nonpossessive warmth
- Friendliness
- Genuineness
- Respect
- Affirmation
- Empathy
- Supportive style
- Patient-centered approach
- Reflective listening

Targeted, open-ended questions, such as those presented in figure 3-2, about the use of drugs and alcohol will elicit more information than simple, closed-ended, “yes” or “no” or single-answer questions. Refer to TIP 34, *Brief Interventions and Brief Therapies for Substance Abuse* (CSAT 1999a) at <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm> for specific examples of interview questions.

### **Figure 3-2 Targeted, Open-Ended Questions About Drug and Alcohol Use**

- “How has heroin use affected your life?”
- “How has hydrocodone affected your life?”
- “In the past, what factors have helped you stop using?”
- “What specific concerns do you have today?”

Most patients are willing and able to provide reliable, factual information regarding their drug use; however, many cannot articulate their reasons or motivation for using drugs. An effective interview should focus on drug use, patterns and consequences of use, past attempts to deal with problems, medical and psychiatric history (the “what, who, when, where, how”)—not on the reasons (the “why”) for addiction problems. Questions should be asked in a direct and straightforward manner, using simple language and avoiding street terms. Assumptive or quantifiable questions, such as those in figure 3-3, yield more accurate responses in the initial phases of the interview.

### **Figure 3-3 Quantifiable Interview Questions**

- “At what age did you first use alcohol or other drugs?”
- “How many days of the week do you drink alcohol?”
- “How often do you use heroin?”
- “When was the last time you were high?”
- “How many times did you use last month?”

*Components of the Complete History.* A thorough and comprehensive medical, social, and drug use history should be taken on all patients being evaluated for substance use disorders. The components of a complete history are shown in figure 3-4.

### **Figure 3-4 Components of a Complete Substance Abuse Assessment History**

- Substance use history (e.g., age of first use; substances used; change in effects over time; history of tolerance, overdose, withdrawal; attempts to quit; current problems with compulsivity or cravings)
- Addiction treatment history (e.g., previous treatments for addiction, types of treatments tried, outcomes of treatment attempts)
- Psychiatric history (e.g., patient's diagnoses, psychiatric treatments recommended/attempted, outcomes of treatments)
- Family history (e.g., substance use disorders in family, family medical and psychiatric history)
- Medical history (e.g., detailed review of systems, past medical/surgical history, sexual history [for women, determine likelihood of pregnancy], current and past medications, pain history)
- Social history (e.g., quality of recovery environment, family/living environment, substance use by members of support network)
- Readiness to change (e.g., patient's understanding of his or her substance use problem, Stage of Change the patient is in [see [appendix G](#)], patient's interest in treatment now, whether treatment is coerced or voluntary)

## **Physical Examination**

The physical examination should focus on physical findings related to addiction. Several physical findings may lead the physician to suspect addiction in patients who deny drug use or have equivocal screening results. Figure 3-5 lists physical examination findings that suggest addiction or its complications. The physical complications of opioid addiction should be identified and addressed as part of the overall treatment plan.

### **Figure 3-5 Examination Findings Suggestive of Addiction or Its Complications**

- General:
  - Odor of alcohol on breath
  - Odor of marijuana on clothing
  - Odor of nicotine or smoke on breath or clothing
  - Poor nutritional status
  - Poor personal hygiene
- Behavior:
  - Intoxicated behavior during exam
  - Slurred speech
  - Staggering gait
  - Scratching
- Skin:-
  - Signs of physical injury
  - Bruises
  - Lacerations
  - Scratches
  - Burns
  - Needle marks
  - Skin abscesses
  - Cellulitis
  - Jaundice
  - Palmar erythema
  - Hair loss
  - Diaphoresis
  - Rash
  - Puffy hands
- Head, Eyes, Ears, Nose, Throat (HEENT):
  - Conjunctival irritation or injection



Inflamed nasal mucosa  
Perforated nasal septum  
Blanched nasal septum  
Sinus tenderness  
Gum disease, gingivitis  
Gingival ulceration  
Rhinitis  
Sinusitis  
Pale mucosae  
Burns in oral cavity

- Gastrointestinal:  
Hepatomegaly  
Liver tenderness  
Positive stool hemocult
- Immune:  
Lymphadenopathy
- Cardiovascular:  
Hypertension  
Tachycardia  
Cardiac arrhythmia  
Heart murmurs, clicks  
Edema  
Swelling
- Pulmonary:  
Wheezing, rales, rhonchi  
Cough  
Respiratory depression
- Female reproductive/endocrine:  
Pelvic tenderness

- Vaginal discharge
- Male reproductive/endocrine:
  - Testicular atrophy
  - Penile discharge
  - Gynecomastia
- Neurologic:
  - Sensory impairment
  - Memory impairment
  - Motor impairment
  - Ophthalmoplegia
  - Myopathy
  - Neuropathy
  - Tremor
  - Cognitive deficits
  - Ataxia
  - Pupillary dilation or constriction

*Assessing Intoxication and Overdose.* It is vitally important to assess for signs of opioid intoxication, overdose, or withdrawal during the physical examination. Opioid overdose should be treated as a medical emergency. Figure 3-6 lists the signs of opioid intoxication and overdose.

**Signs of Opioid Intoxication and Overdose**

<b>Syndrome</b>	<b>Physical Findings</b>
Opioid Intoxication	Conscious Sedated, drowsy Slurred speech "Nodding" or intermittently dozing Memory impairment Mood normal to euphoric Pupillary constriction
Opioid Overdose	Unconscious Pinpoint pupils Slow, shallow respirations; respirations below 10 per minute Pulse rate below 40 per

Syndrome	Physical Findings
	minute Overdose triad: apnea, coma, pinpoint pupils (with terminal anoxia: fixed and dilated pupils)

*Assessing Opioid Withdrawal.* Opioid withdrawal can be objectively assessed by using one of the following several instruments:

- COWS (Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale) ([Wesson et al. 1999](#))
- SOWS (Short Opiate Withdrawal Scale) ([Bradley et al. 1987](#); [Gossop 1990](#); [Handelsman et al. 1987](#))
- CINA (Clinical Institute Narcotic Assessment Scale for Withdrawal Symptoms) ([Peachey and Lei 1988](#))
- Narcotic Withdrawal Scale ([Fultz and Senay 1975](#))

Full text and/or links to these instruments are included in [appendix B](#). Figure 3-7 shows methods of staging and grading opioid withdrawal.

#### Staging and Grading Systems of Opioid Withdrawal

Stage	Grade	Physical Signs/Symptoms
Early Withdrawal (8–24 hours after last use)	Grade 1	Lacrimation and/or rhinorrhea Diaphoresis Yawning Restlessness Insomnia
	Grade 2	Dilated pupils Piloerection Muscle twitching Myalgia Arthralgia Abdominal pain
Fully Developed Withdrawal (1–3 days)	Grade 3	Tachycardia Hypertension Tachypnea Fever Anorexia or nausea Extreme

Stage	Grade	Physical Signs/Symptoms
after last use)		restlessness
	Grade 4	Diarrhea and/or vomiting Dehydration Hyperglycemia Hypotension Curled-up position

*Assessing Other Drug Intoxication or Withdrawal Syndromes.* Instruments for assessing withdrawal from alcohol and benzodiazepines include

- CIWA-Ar (Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol, Revised) (Sullivan et al. 1989)
- CIWA-B (Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Benzodiazepines) (Busto et al. 1989)

## Mental Status Examination

In addition to observing a patient's behavior during history taking and the physical examination, a formal mental status examination (MSE) should be performed, including the components shown in figure 3-8.

### Figure 3-8 Mental Status Examination Checklist

- General appearance
- Behavior and interaction with interviewer
- Speech and voice
- Motor activity
- Mood and affect
- Perceptions
  - Hallucinations
- Thought process

- Thought content
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Homicidal ideation
  - Delusions
- Insight
- Judgment
- Motivation and readiness to change
  - Patient’s stated goals and expectations
- Cognitive function
  - Orientation
  - Memory
  - Attention
  - Concentration
  - Fund of information
  - Literacy skills
  - Abstraction
  - Intelligence
- Personality characteristics
- Defense mechanisms

Information from the interview and MSE may reveal significant current or past psychiatric problems. Depending on the physician’s expertise and comfort in managing psychiatric disorders, referral to an addiction psychiatrist or psychologist for a full mental health evaluation and/or formal psychiatric diagnosis may be indicated before starting treatment for addiction.

## **Laboratory Evaluations**

Laboratory testing is an important part of the assessment and evaluation of patients who have an addiction. Laboratory tests cannot make a diagnosis of addiction, but a variety of laboratory evaluations are useful in the comprehensive assessment of patients who have an addiction.

The recommended baseline laboratory evaluation of patients who are addicted to opioids is shown in figure 3-9.

**Figure 3-9 Recommended Baseline Laboratory Evaluation of Patients Who Are Addicted to Opioids**

- Serum electrolytes
- BUN and creatinine
- CBC with differential and platelet count
- Liver function tests (GGT, AST, ALT, PT or INR, albumin)
- Lipid profile
- Urinalysis
- Pregnancy test (for women of childbearing age)
- Toxicology tests for drugs of abuse
- Hepatitis B and C screens

The following additional laboratory evaluations should be considered and offered as indicated:

- Blood alcohol level (using a breath testing instrument or a blood sample)
- Infectious disease evaluation:
  - HIV antibody testing
  - Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) screens
  - Serology test for syphilis—Venereal Disease Research Laboratories (VDRL)
  - Purified protein derivative (PPD) test for tuberculosis, preferably with control skin tests

In addition, other laboratory evaluations may be indicated by the patient's history or physical examination. Appropriate counseling should be provided, and consent obtained, before testing for certain infectious diseases (e.g., HIV, hepatitis C). Abnormalities or medical problems

detected by laboratory evaluation should be addressed as they would be for patients who are not addicted.

Several findings may alert physicians to potential complications to treatment with buprenorphine. Alcohol use may complicate buprenorphine treatment; indirect indicators of excess alcohol use include elevated mean corpuscular volume (MCV) and gamma glutamyl transpeptidase (GGT). Liver enzyme abnormalities also may suggest liver disease from toxicity, infection, or other factors. Additional biomedical markers such as Carbohydrate-Deficient Transferrin (CDT) may provide further objective information on screening and confirmation of acute or recent alcohol consumption, relapse to use, heavy or harmful use, and alcohol-related organ dysfunction. Guidance on liver disease in patients who are addicted to opioids will be available from SAMHSA's Division of Pharmacologic Therapies (DPT) Web site at <http://www.dpt.samhsa.gov>.

As described elsewhere, pregnancy, HIV treatment, and active hepatitis or liver disease also may complicate treatment with buprenorphine. Pregnant women may not be optimal candidates for buprenorphine treatment. HIV-positive status does not preclude buprenorphine treatment, but as-yet-unrecognized antiretroviral medication interactions with buprenorphine may potentially interfere with treatment. Positive results on hepatitis B surface antigen testing indicate active HBV infection, possibly associated with active hepatitis. Further testing (e.g., serial enzymes) may be indicated to determine whether HBV infection complicates buprenorphine treatment. Hepatitis B information for health professionals can be accessed on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/b/index.htm>.

A confirmed positive hepatitis C antibody test indicates current or past infection with HCV. Patients who test positive for HCV should be further evaluated and treated according to the most up-to-date recommendations. Training for health professionals on HCV is available on the CDC Web site at [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c\\_training/edu/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c_training/edu/default.htm). The 2002 National Institutes of Health (NIH) Consensus Statement regarding the management of hepatitis C is available on the Web at [http://consensus.nih.gov/cons/116/116cdc\\_intro.htm](http://consensus.nih.gov/cons/116/116cdc_intro.htm). Materials

about hepatitis C also are available on the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Web site at <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/hepcsum.htm>.

Positive serology tests for syphilis may indicate active or past infection with *Treponema pallidum*. All patients with such positive test results should be treated onsite or referred to a local health department for further evaluation and treatment. It should be noted, however, that biologic false positive results on serology tests for syphilis are common in individuals who abuse drugs intravenously. Only those with confirmatory fluorescent treponemal antibody absorption (FTA-ABS) tests are likely to have actual treponemal infection. The most current treatment recommendations for syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are posted on the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/std/>.

A positive PPD skin test may indicate past or current infection with tuberculosis. Any patient with a positive PPD test should be referred to a local health department for further evaluation and treatment. Additional information on tuberculosis and its treatment is found on the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/links.htm>. Physicians should be familiar with all reporting requirements for infectious diseases in their State.

## **Evaluations of Drug Use**

Tests for illicit drugs are not sufficient to diagnose addiction and cannot substitute for a clinical interview and medical evaluation of the patient (Casavant 2002). [Hammett-Stabler et al. \(2002\)](#) point out that the term *drug screen* is a misnomer, because not all drugs are, and cannot be, tested for routinely. Physicians must decide which drug tests are necessary in each clinical setting, including office-based buprenorphine treatment. Physicians and laboratory personnel must understand the limitations of the assays used, the pharmacokinetic characteristics of the drugs assayed, the parent compound–metabolite relationships, and how to interpret laboratory results ([Hammett-Stabler et al. 2002](#)). Testing for drugs can be performed on a number of bodily fluids and tissues, including urine, blood, saliva, sweat, and hair. Urine screening is the method most commonly employed. A comprehensive discussion of urine drug testing in the primary care setting can be found in *Urine Drug Testing in Primary Care: Dispelling the Myths & Designing*



*Strategies* (Gourlay et al. 2002). When selecting drug tests, physicians should consider the cost to patients, as testing for all possible drugs of abuse can be costly.

In buprenorphine treatment, appropriate tests for illicit drug use should be administered as part of patient assessment. Physicians should explain the role of drug testing at the beginning of treatment for addiction. The literature supports the therapeutic utility of random drug testing in clinical settings (Preston et al. 2002). Laboratory test results can be used in the physician-patient interaction to further treatment objectives, to address patient denial, and to reinforce abstinence from other drugs. Initial and ongoing drug screening should be used to detect or confirm the recent use of drugs (e.g., alcohol, benzodiazepines, barbiturates) that could complicate management of a patient on buprenorphine.

When a patient requests treatment with buprenorphine, a toxicology screen can help to establish that the patient is indeed using either a proscribed substance such as heroin or a prescribed substance such as oxycodone. A negative test does not necessarily mean that the patient is not using an opioid. It may mean that the patient has not used an opioid within a period of time sufficient to produce measurable metabolic products or that the patient was not using the drug for which he or she was tested. Thus, as with any patient, the physician is alerted to a spectrum of possibilities and works with the patient using the information collected from the toxicology screen.

Several manufacturers produce combination urine collection and test kits that facilitate in-office urine testing. In-office testing facilitates prompt evaluation of clinical parameters and allows the physician to present the results to the patient and to make immediate therapeutic use of the information. However, physicians who do not work in a setting with an onsite, federally regulated laboratory must ensure that they are using in-office testing kits waived from regulatory oversight under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) law of 1988. See the CLIA pages on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Web site at <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/cli/cliawaived.html> for more information about the law and CLIA-waived point-of-care testing kits. For the current listing of CLIA-waived urine drug tests, refer to the FDA Web site at

<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfClia/testswaived.cfm> or search the FDA CLIA database at <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfCLIA/search.cfm>.

Toxicology testing for drugs of abuse that takes place at scheduled visits cannot be truly random; nevertheless, it is clinically worthwhile. Urine samples should be collected in a room where they cannot be diluted or otherwise adulterated and where patients are not permitted to bring briefcases, purses, bags, or containers of any sort. If these conditions are not feasible, temperature-sensitive strips, specific gravity, and creatinine can be used to minimize the possibility of false or adulterated urine specimens. If the physician's office cannot provide this service, patients can be referred to a facility that is equipped to perform monitored specimen collection. Another option that is sometimes feasible is to collect a sample of oral fluid (saliva) to be sent to a laboratory for testing.

Timely shipment of samples for testing and rapid turnaround time for the results are also important issues that should be resolved before undertaking office-based treatment of opioid addiction. If a patient needs drug test results for employment or for legal monitoring, strict chain-of-custody procedures must be followed, and samples should be evaluated by a SAMHSA-certified laboratory. If a patient subsequently wants to use the drug test result for other purposes, both the physician and the patient should understand the limits of the office testing and other requirements for the test. Other than for U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Transportation, private-sector testing requirements may be less rigorous. Further information about the detection of drugs in urine and other biological samples is found in [appendix E](#).

## **Diagnosis of Opioid-Related Disorders**

After a thorough assessment of a patient has been conducted, a formal diagnosis can be made. Criteria for substance dependence, such as those set forth in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR)* ([American Psychiatric Association 2000](#)) (see [Appendix C](#)) or the *International Classification of Diseases—Ninth Edition—Clinical Modification: ICD-9-CM*, should be used to document a diagnosis of opioid

dependence. (This diagnosis is not merely physical dependence on opioids but corresponds to opioid addiction, classically defined as compulsive use despite harm.)

DSM-IV-TR defines several opioid-related disorders. (See figure 3-10.) A DSM-IV-TR diagnosis of either opioid dependence or abuse is based on a cluster of behaviors and physiological effects occurring within a specific timeframe. The diagnosis of opioid dependence always takes precedence over that of opioid abuse (i.e., a diagnosis of abuse is made only if DSM-IV-TR criteria for dependence have never been met). As a general rule, to be considered for buprenorphine maintenance, patients should meet the DSM-IV-TR criteria for a diagnosis of opioid dependence. (See full diagnostic criteria in [appendix C](#).) In rare instances, a patient may be physiologically dependent on opioids and meet DSM-IV-TR criteria for abuse, but not for dependence. In such a case, a short course of buprenorphine may be considered for detoxification. Maintenance treatment with buprenorphine is not recommended for patients who do not meet DSM-IV-TR criteria for opioid dependence.

**Figure 3-10 DSM-IV-TR Opioid Use Disorders (ICD-9 Code)**

- Opioid Abuse (305.50)
- Opioid Dependence (304.00)
- Opioid Intoxication (292.89)
- Opioid Withdrawal (292.0)
- Opioid Intoxication Delirium (292.81)
- Opioid-Induced Psychotic Disorder, With Delusions (292.11)
- Opioid-Induced Psychotic Disorder, With Hallucinations (292.12)
- Opioid-Induced Mood Disorder (292.84)
- Opioid-Induced Sexual Dysfunction (292.89)
- Opioid-Induced Sleep Disorder (292.89)
- Opioid-Related Disorder NOS (292.9)

*Source: International Classification of Diseases, 9th Rev., Clinical Modification: ICD-9-CM. Volumes 1 and 2. Salt Lake City, UT: Ingenix, Medicode, 2003. 810 pages.*

## Common Comorbid Medical Conditions

Individuals addicted to opioids may have the same chronic diseases seen in the general population and should be evaluated as appropriate for diseases that require treatment (e.g., diabetes, hypertension). In addition, a number of medical conditions are commonly associated with opioid and other drug addictions. During the course of a medical history and physical examination, the possible existence of these conditions should be evaluated. Refer to figure 3-11 for a detailed list of selected medical disorders related to drug and alcohol use.

### Selected Medical Disorders Related to Alcohol and Other Drug Use

<b>Cardiovascular</b>	<b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b>
Cancer	<i>Alcohol:</i> Aerodigestive (lip, oral cavity, tongue, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, stomach, colon), breast,

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
	<p>hepatocellular and bile duct cancers. <i>Tobacco:</i> Oral cavity, larynx, lung, cervical, esophagus, pancreas, kidney, stomach, bladder. <i>Injection drug use or high-risk sexual behavior:</i> Hepatocellular carcinoma related to hepatitis C.</p>
<p>Endocrine/ Reproductive</p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia, diabetes, ketoacidosis, hypertriglyceridemia, hyperuricemia and gout, testicular atrophy, gynecomastia, hypocalcemia and hypomagnesemia because of reversible hypoparathyroidism, hypercortisolemia, osteopenia, infertility, sexual dysfunction. <i>Cocaine:</i> Diabetic ketoacidosis. <i>Opiates:</i> Osteopenia, alteration in</p>

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
	<p>gonadotropins, decreased sperm motility, menstrual irregularities. <i>Tobacco:</i> Graves disease, azoospermia, erectile dysfunction, osteopenia, osteoporosis, fractures, estrogen alterations, insulin resistance. <i>Any addiction:</i> Amenorrhea.</p>
<p>Hepatic</p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Steatosis (fatty liver), acute and chronic hepatitis (infectious [that is, B or C] or toxic [that is, acetaminophen]), alcoholic hepatitis, cirrhosis, portal hypertension and varices, spontaneous bacterial peritonitis. <i>Cocaine:</i> Ischemic necrosis, hepatitis. <i>Opiates:</i> Granulomatosis. <i>Injection drug use or high-risk sexual behavior:</i> Infectious hepatitis B and C (acute and chronic)</p>

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
	<p>and delta.</p>
<p><b>Hematologic</b></p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Macrocytic anemia, pancytopenia because of marrow toxicity and/or splenic sequestration, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia, coagulopathy because of liver disease, iron deficiency, folate deficiency, spur cell anemia, burr cell anemia. <i>Tobacco:</i> Hypercoagulability. <i>Injection drug use or high-risk sexual behavior:</i> Hematologic consequences of liver disease, hepatitis C-related cryoglobulinemia and purpura.</p>
<p><b>Infectious</b></p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Hepatitis C, pneumonia, tuberculosis (including meningitis), HIV, sexually transmitted diseases,</p>

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
	<p>spontaneous bacterial peritonitis, brain abscess, meningitis. <i>Opiates:</i> Aspiration pneumonia. <i>Tobacco:</i> Bronchitis, pneumonia, upper respiratory tract infections. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, cellulitis, pneumonia, septic thrombophlebitis, septic arthritis (unusual joints, that is, sternoclavicular), osteomyelitis (including vertebral), epidural and brain abscess, mycotic aneurysm, abscesses and soft tissue infections, mediastinitis, malaria, tetanus. <i>Injection or high-risk sexual behavior:</i> Hepatitis B, C, and delta; HIV; sexually transmitted diseases.</p>
<p><b>Neurologic</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Peripheral and autonomic neuropathy, seizure,</b></p>



<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
	<p>hepatic encephalopathy, Korsakoff dementia, Wernicke syndrome, cerebellar dysfunction, Marchiafava-Bignami syndrome, central pontine myelinolysis, myopathy, amblyopia, stroke, withdrawal, delirium, hallucinations, toxic leukoencephalopathy, subdural hematoma, intracranial hemorrhage. <i>Cocaine:</i> Stroke, seizure, status epilepticus, headache, delirium, depression, hypersomnia, cognitive deficits. <i>Opiates:</i> Seizure (overdose and hypoxia), compression neuropathy. <i>Tobacco:</i> Stroke, small vessel ischemia and cognitive deficits. <i>Any addiction:</i> Compression neuropathy.</p>
<p><b>Nutritional</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Vitamin and mineral deficiencies (B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>6</sub>,</b></p>

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
	<p>riboflavin, niacin, vitamin D, magnesium, calcium, folate, phosphate, zinc). <i>Any addiction:</i> Protein malnutrition.</p>
<p>Other Gastrointestinal</p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Gastritis, esophagitis, pancreatitis, diarrhea, malabsorption (because of pancreatic exocrine insufficiency, or folate or lactase deficiency), parotid enlargement, malignancy, colitis, Barrett esophagus, gastroesophageal reflux, Mallory-Weiss syndrome, gastrointestinal bleeding. <i>Cocaine:</i> Ischemic bowel and colitis. <i>Opiates:</i> Constipation, ileus, intestinal pseudo-obstruction. <i>Tobacco:</i> Peptic ulcers, gastroesophageal reflux, malignancy (pancreas, stomach). <i>Any addiction:</i> Overdose from body-packing.</b></p>

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
<p>Prenatal and Perinatal</p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Fetal alcohol effects and syndrome. <i>Cocaine:</i> Placental abruption, teratogenesis, neonatal irritability. <i>Opiates:</i> Neonatal abstinence syndrome, including seizures. <i>Tobacco:</i> Teratogenesis, low birth weight, spontaneous abortion, abruptio placentae, placenta previa, perinatal mortality, sudden infant death syndrome, neurodevelopmental impairment.</p>
<p>Perioperative</p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Withdrawal, perioperative complications (delirium, infection, bleeding, pneumonia, delayed wound healing, dysrhythmia), hepatic decompensation, hepatorenal syndrome, death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypersomnia and</p>

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
	<p>depression in withdrawal, mimicking of postoperative neurologic complications, complications from underlying drug-induced cardiopulmonary disease. <i>Opiates:</i> Withdrawal, inadequate analgesia. <i>Tobacco:</i> Pulmonary infection, difficulty weaning, respiratory failure, reactive airways exacerbations.</p>
<p><b>Pulmonary</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Aspiration, sleep apnea, respiratory depression, apnea, chemical or infectious pneumonitis. <i>Cocaine:</i> Nasal septum perforation, gingival ulceration, perennial rhinitis, sinusitis, hemoptysis, upper airway obstruction, fibrosis, hypersensitivity pneumonitis, epiglottitis, pulmonary hemorrhage, pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary edema,</b></p>

**Cardiovascular**

***Alcohol:* Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. *Cocaine:* Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. *Tobacco:* Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. *Injection drug use:* Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.**

emphysema, interstitial fibrosis, hypersensitivity pneumonia. *Inhalants:* Pulmonary edema, bronchospasm, bronchitis, granulomatosis, airway burns. *Opiates:* Respiratory depression/failure, emphysema, bronchospasm, exacerbation of sleep apnea, pulmonary edema. *Tobacco:* Lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, reactive airways, pneumonia, bronchitis, pulmonary hypertension, interstitial lung disease, pneumothorax. *Injection drug use:* Pulmonary hypertension, talc granulomatosis, septic pulmonary embolism, pneumothorax, emphysema, needle embolization.

**Cardiovascular**

***Alcohol:* Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. *Cocaine:* Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. *Tobacco:* Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. *Injection drug use:* Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.**

**Renal**

*Alcohol:* Hepatorenal syndrome, rhabdomyolysis and acute renal failure, volume depletion and prerenal failure, acidosis, hypokalemia, hypophosphatemia. *Cocaine:* Rhabdomyolysis and acute renal failure, vasculitis, necrotizing angiitis, accelerated hypertension, nephrosclerosis, ischemia. *Opiates:* Rhabdomyolysis, acute renal failure, factitious hematuria. *Tobacco:* Renal failure, hypertension. *Injection drug use or high-risk sexual behavior:* Focal glomerular sclerosis (HIV, heroin), glomerulonephritis from hepatitis or endocarditis, chronic renal failure, amyloidosis, nephrotic syndrome (hepatitis C).

<p><b>Cardiovascular</b></p>	<p><b><i>Alcohol:</i> Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. <i>Tobacco:</i> Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. <i>Injection drug use:</i> Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.</b></p>
<p>Sleep</p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Apnea, periodic limb movements of sleep, insomnia, disrupted sleep, daytime fatigue. <i>Cocaine:</i> Hypersomnia in withdrawal. <i>Opiates:</i> Insomnia. <i>Tobacco:</i> Insomnia, increased sleep latency.</p>
<p>Trauma</p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Motor vehicle crash, fatal and nonfatal injury, physical and sexual abuse. <i>Cocaine:</i> Death during "Russian Roulette." <i>Opiates:</i> Motor vehicle crash, other violent injury. <i>Tobacco:</i> Burns, smoke inhalation. <i>Any addiction:</i> Sexual and physical abuse.</p>
<p>Musculoskeletal</p>	<p><i>Alcohol:</i> Rhabdomyolysis, compartment syndromes, gout,</p>

**Cardiovascular** *Alcohol:* Cardiomyopathy, atrial fibrillation (holiday heart), hypertension, dysrhythmia, masks angina symptoms, coronary artery spasm, myocardial ischemia, high-output states, coronary artery disease, sudden death. *Cocaine:* Hypertension, myocardial infarction, angina, chest pain, supraventricular tachycardia, ventricular dysrhythmias, cardiomyopathy, cardiovascular collapse from body-packing rupture, moyamoya vasculopathy, left ventricular hypertrophy, myocarditis, sudden death, aortic dissection. *Tobacco:* Atherosclerosis, stroke, myocardial infarction, peripheral vascular disease, cor pulmonale, erectile dysfunction, worse control of hypertension, angina, dysrhythmia. *Injection drug use:* Endocarditis, septic thrombophlebitis.

saturnine gout, fracture, osteopenia, osteonecrosis.

*Cocaine:* Rhabdomyolysis. *Opiates:* Osteopenia. *Any addiction:* Compartment syndromes, fractures.

*Source:* Saitz 2003. Overview of medical and surgical complications. In Graham, A.W.; Schultz, T.K.; Mayo-Smith, M.F.; Ries, R.K.; and Wilford, B.B., eds. *Principles of Addiction Medicine*, 3rd ed. Copyright 2003, American Society of Addiction Medicine, Chevy Chase, MD. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

Infectious diseases are more common among individuals who are addicted to opioids, individuals who are addicted to other drugs, and individuals who inject drugs. For example, in some areas, more than 50 percent of injection drug users may be HIV positive. There are wide variations in the epidemiology of HIV infection, however, and in other areas the prevalence of HIV infection



among injection drug users may be less than 10 percent. Because of the potential impact of HIV on the lives of affected patients and the availability of effective treatments, it is important to screen for HIV infection among patients who present for buprenorphine treatment.

Tuberculosis is also a major problem among substance abusers. In 2001, 2.3 percent of tuberculosis cases in the United States occurred in injection drug users, 7.2 percent in noninjection drug users, and 15.2 percent in individuals with excessive alcohol use in the past 12 months (CDC 2002; <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/surv/surv2001/default.htm>. See tables 28, 29, and 30). Individuals who abuse drugs and alcohol are also at increased risk of engaging in high-risk sexual behavior (e.g., exposure to multiple partners, inconsistent use of safe sexual practices) and of contracting syphilis, gonorrhea, and other STDs.

Among individuals who are opioid addicted, other common medical conditions are related to the use of other drugs and to the life disruptions that often accompany addiction. These conditions include nutritional deficiencies and anemia caused by poor eating habits; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease secondary to cigarette smoking; impaired hepatic function or moderately elevated liver enzymes from various forms of chronic hepatitis (particularly hepatitis B and C) and alcohol consumption; and cirrhosis, neuropathies, or cardiomyopathy secondary to alcohol dependence.

## **Summary**

After completing a comprehensive assessment of a candidate for treatment, the physician should be prepared to

- Establish the diagnosis or diagnoses
- Determine appropriate treatment options for the patient
- Make initial treatment recommendations
- Formulate an initial treatment plan
- Plan for engagement in psychosocial treatment

- Ensure that there are no absolute contraindications to the recommended treatments
- Assess other medical problems or conditions that need to be addressed during early treatment
- Assess other psychiatric or psychosocial problems that need to be addressed during early treatment

The next section describes methods for determining the appropriateness of buprenorphine treatment for patients who have an opioid addiction.

## Determining Appropriateness for Buprenorphine Treatment

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Several issues should be considered in evaluating whether a patient is an appropriate candidate for buprenorphine treatment of opioid addiction in the office or other setting.

First, a candidate for buprenorphine treatment for opioid addiction should have an objectively ascertained diagnosis of opioid addiction (compulsive use of opioids despite harm), otherwise known as opioid dependence as defined in the latest edition of the DSM-IV-TR of the [APA \(2000\)](#). Refer to [appendix C](#) for DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria for opioid dependence and opioid abuse. In rare instances, a patient may be physiologically dependent on opioids and meet DSM-IV-TR criteria for abuse, but not for dependence. In such a case, a short course of buprenorphine may be considered for detoxification. Maintenance treatment with buprenorphine is not recommended for patients who do not meet DSM-IV-TR criteria for opioid dependence.

Second, a candidate for buprenorphine treatment should, at a minimum

- Be interested in treatment for opioid addiction
- Have no absolute contraindication (i.e., known hypersensitivity) to buprenorphine (or to naloxone if treating with the buprenorphine/naloxone combination)
- Be expected to be reasonably compliant with such treatment

- Understand the risks and benefits of buprenorphine treatment
- Be willing to follow safety precautions for buprenorphine treatment
- Agree to buprenorphine treatment after a review of treatment options

Patients who request treatment with buprenorphine to achieve abstinence from all illicit opioid use should be able to receive this treatment, if it is clinically indicated.

## Evaluation Questions

To thoroughly evaluate a patient for appropriateness for opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine, the physician should ask the following questions:

1. **Does the patient have a diagnosis of opioid dependence?**  
Candidates for buprenorphine treatment should have a diagnosis of opioid dependence. Buprenorphine treatment is not indicated for other disorders.
2. **Are there current signs of intoxication or withdrawal? Is there a risk for severe withdrawal?** The physician should assess the patient for current signs of intoxication or withdrawal from opioids or other drugs as well as for the risk of severe withdrawal. The risk of severe opioid withdrawal is not a contraindication to buprenorphine treatment. The risk of withdrawal from sedative-hypnotics, however, may initially preclude the use of buprenorphine in an office setting.
3. **Is the patient interested in buprenorphine treatment?** If a patient with opioid addiction has not heard of or presented specifically for buprenorphine treatment, buprenorphine treatment should be discussed as a treatment option.
4. **Does the patient understand the risks and benefits of buprenorphine treatment?** (Refer to chapter 2 and [appendix H.](#)) It should be assumed that many patients are unaware that buprenorphine is an opioid, thus they should be so informed. The risks and benefits of buprenorphine treatment should be presented to potential patients, and

their understanding of these factors evaluated. Physicians must review the safety, efficacy, side effects, potential treatment duration, and other factors with each patient.

5. **Can the patient be expected to adhere to the treatment plan?** This is a judgment call, based on the patient's past adherence to treatment for addiction or other medical conditions, comorbid psychiatric conditions, psychosocial stability, comorbid substance use disorders, and other factors.
6. **Is the patient willing and able to follow safety procedures?** If a patient is unwilling or unable to follow safety procedures, or is dismissive of them, then that patient is not a good candidate for office-based treatment with buprenorphine.
7. **Does the patient agree to treatment after review of the options?** Buprenorphine treatment is not coercive; the patient must agree to treatment before it is initiated. Treatment options (including no treatment, dose-reduction, abstinence-based treatment, and the variety of medication treatments) and their associated risks and benefits should be reviewed so that patients can make informed decisions about buprenorphine treatment.
8. **Can the needed resources for the patient be provided (either onsite or offsite)?** Each patient's needs should be assessed. If the resources that are available onsite or offsite are insufficient for a particular patient, he or she should be referred to an appropriate treatment setting or provider.
9. **Is the patient psychiatrically stable?** Is the patient actively suicidal or homicidal? Has he or she recently attempted suicide or homicide? Do current emotional, behavioral, or cognitive conditions complicate treatment? Patients who have significant untreated psychiatric comorbidity are less-than-ideal candidates for office-based buprenorphine treatment. A

full psychiatric assessment is indicated for all patients who have significant psychiatric comorbidity. Psychiatric comorbidity requires appropriate management or referral as part of treatment. It should be noted that the buprenorphine clinical trials reported to date have not included patients maintained on antipsychotic or mood-stabilizing agents (e.g., lithium), and thus there is limited or no information on the potential interactions with these medications.

10. **Is the patient pregnant?** If a patient is pregnant or is likely to become pregnant during the course of treatment, buprenorphine may not be the best choice. (See “Pregnant Women and Neonates” in chapter 5.) Currently, methadone maintenance, when it is available, is the treatment of choice for patients who are pregnant and are opioid addicted.
11. **Is the patient currently dependent on or abusing alcohol?** Patients with alcohol abuse or dependence, whether continuous or periodic in pattern, may be at risk of overdose from the combination of alcohol with buprenorphine. Patients with high-risk or harmful drinking patterns are, therefore, less likely to be appropriate candidates for office-based buprenorphine treatment.
12. **Is the patient currently dependent on or abusing benzodiazepines, barbiturates, or other sedative-hypnotics?** Patients who have sedative-hypnotic abuse or dependence, whether continuous or periodic in pattern, may be at some risk of overdose and death from the combination of sedative-hypnotics with buprenorphine.
13. **What is the patient’s risk for continued opioid use or continued problems? Does the patient have a history of multiple previous treatments or relapses, or is the patient at high risk for relapse to opioid use? Is the patient using other drugs?** Several factors may increase a patient’s risk for continued use of opioids or continued problems. A patient who is using other (nonopioid) drugs or who has a

history of multiple previous treatments or relapses may not be an appropriate candidate for office-based buprenorphine treatment. Physicians should assess the patient's understanding of problems and relapse triggers, as well as his or her skills in managing cravings and controlling impulses to use drugs. Multiple previous attempts at detoxification which were followed by relapse to opioid use, however, are not a contradiction to maintenance with buprenorphine. Rather, such a history is a strong indication for maintenance treatment with pharmacotherapy.

**14. Has the patient had prior adverse reactions to buprenorphine?**

Cases of acute and chronic hypersensitivity to Subutex® have been reported both in clinical trials and in the postmarketing experience. The most common signs and symptoms include rashes, hives, and pruritus. Cases of bronchospasm, angioneurotic edema, and anaphylactic shock have been reported. A history of hypersensitivity to buprenorphine is a contraindication to Subutex® and Suboxone® use. A history of hypersensitivity to naloxone is a contraindication to Suboxone® use. (Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare (UK), Ltd. and Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals, Inc. 2002).

**15. Is the patient taking other medications that may interact with buprenorphine?**

Certain medications (e.g., naltrexone) may be absolutely contraindicated with buprenorphine treatment (see chapter 2) and must be discontinued or changed before starting buprenorphine. If this is not a reasonable clinical alternative, the patient may not be a candidate for buprenorphine treatment. Use of other medications, such as those metabolized by the cytochrome P450 3A4 system (e.g., azoles, macrolide antibiotics, calcium channel blockers, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors [SSRIs]) may need to be closely monitored when used concurrently with buprenorphine. (See figure 2-3.)

16. **Does the patient have medical problems that are contraindications to buprenorphine treatment? Could physical illnesses complicate treatment?** A complete history and physical assessment must address any medical problems or physical illnesses, and physicians must evaluate the impact of these conditions on buprenorphine treatment.
17. **What kind of recovery environment does the patient have? Are the patient's psychosocial circumstances sufficiently stable and supportive?** Any threats to the patient's safety or treatment engagement should be addressed at the beginning of assessment. Supportive relationships and resources will increase the likelihood of successful treatment.
18. **What is the patient's level of motivation? What stage of change characterizes the patient?** Motivation is a dynamic quality that can be enhanced by treatment providers. Physicians may wish to determine each patient's readiness to change using tools such as the Stages of Change Readiness and Treatment Eagerness Scale (SOCRATES) (see [appendix G](#)) and to make interventions directed to the patient's current stage of change. Highly motivated individuals are more appropriate candidates for office-based buprenorphine treatment.

Figure 3-12 provides a checklist for ascertaining the appropriateness for buprenorphine treatment.

### **Figure 3-12 Buprenorphine Treatment Checklist**

1. Does the patient have a diagnosis of opioid dependence?
2. Are there current signs of intoxication or withdrawal? Is there a risk for severe withdrawal?
3. Is the patient interested in buprenorphine treatment?
4. Does the patient understand the risks and benefits of buprenorphine treatment?

5. Can the patient be expected to adhere to the treatment plan?
6. Is the patient willing and able to follow safety procedures?
7. Does the patient agree to treatment after a review of the options?
8. Can the needed resources for the patient be provided (either on- or offsite)?
9. Is the patient psychiatrically stable? Is the patient actively suicidal or homicidal; has he or she recently attempted suicide or homicide? Does the patient exhibit emotional, behavioral, or cognitive conditions that complicate treatment?
10. Is the patient pregnant?
11. Is the patient currently dependent on or abusing alcohol?
12. Is the patient currently dependent on benzodiazepines, barbiturates, or other sedative-hypnotics?
13. What is the patient's risk for continued use or continued problems? Does the patient have a history of multiple previous treatments or relapses, or is the patient at high risk for relapse to opioid use? Is the patient using other drugs?
14. Has the patient had prior adverse reactions to buprenorphine?
15. Is the patient taking other medications that may interact with buprenorphine?
16. Does the patient have medical problems that are contraindications to buprenorphine treatment? Are there physical illnesses that complicate treatment?
17. What kind of recovery environment does the patient have? Are the patient's psychosocial circumstances sufficiently stable and supportive?
18. What is the patient's level of motivation? What stage of change characterizes this patient?

Patients less likely to be appropriate candidates for office-based treatment are individuals whose circumstances or conditions include or have previously included those listed in figure 3-13.



### **Figure 3-13 Conditions and Circumstances That May Preclude a Patient as a Candidate for Office-Based Buprenorphine Treatment**

- Comorbid dependence on high doses of benzodiazepines or other central nervous system depressants (including alcohol)
- Significant untreated psychiatric comorbidity
- Active or chronic suicidal or homicidal ideation or attempts
- Multiple previous treatments for drug abuse with frequent relapses (except that multiple previous detoxification episodes with relapse are a strong indication for long-term maintenance treatment)
- Poor response to previous well-conducted attempts at buprenorphine treatment
- Significant medical complications
- Conditions that are outside the area of the treating physician's expertise

## **Cautions and Contraindications for Buprenorphine Treatment**

Several medical conditions and medications, as well as concurrent abuse of other drugs and alcohol, necessitate caution or are relative contraindications to buprenorphine treatment.

### **Seizures**

Buprenorphine should be used cautiously in patients who are being treated for seizure disorders. When buprenorphine is used concurrently with antiseizure medications (e.g., phenytoin, carbamazepine, valproic acid, and others), metabolism of buprenorphine and/or the antiseizure medications may be altered. (See figure 2-3.) In addition, the relative risk of interaction between buprenorphine and sedative-hypnotics (e.g., phenobarbital, clonazepam) should be kept in mind. Monitoring for therapeutic plasma levels of seizure medications should be considered.

### **HIV Treatment**

Buprenorphine should be used cautiously in combination with HIV antiretroviral medications that may inhibit, induce, or be metabolized by the cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme system. (See figure 2-3.) Protease inhibitors inhibit cytochrome P450 3A4. Metabolism of buprenorphine and/or the antiretroviral medications may be altered when they are combined. In some cases, therapeutic blood levels may need to be monitored. Note that this is a caution, not a contraindication; successful treatment of addiction with buprenorphine in HIV-infected patients has been well demonstrated ([Berson et al. 2001](#); [Carrieri et al. 2000](#); [McCance-Katz et al. 2001](#); [Moatti et al. 2000](#)).

## **Hepatitis and Impaired Hepatic Function**

Pharmacotherapy with buprenorphine is not contraindicated on the basis of mildly elevated liver enzymes; however, elevated liver enzymes should be appropriately evaluated and monitored frequently. Viral hepatitis (especially infection with HBV or HCV) is common among individuals who abuse opioids and should be evaluated and treated appropriately.

## **Pregnancy**

Buprenorphine is classified by FDA as a Category C agent. Very few studies exist on the use of buprenorphine in pregnant women. If a patient is pregnant or is likely to become pregnant during the course of treatment with buprenorphine, the physician must consider whether buprenorphine is the appropriate treatment and must weigh the risks and benefits of buprenorphine treatment against all the risks associated with continued heroin or other opioid use. In the United States, methadone is the standard of care for pregnant women who are addicted to opioids. (See "Pregnant Women and Neonates" in chapter 5.)

## **Use of Other Drugs**

Buprenorphine is a treatment for opioid addiction, not for addiction to other classes of drugs. Although the use of other drugs tends to be a predictor of poor adherence, other drug use is not an absolute contraindication to buprenorphine treatment. (See below for exceptions.)

Patients should be encouraged to abstain from the use of all nonprescribed drugs while receiving buprenorphine treatment. However, abuse of or dependence on other drugs (e.g., alcohol, cocaine, stimulants, sedative-hypnotics, hallucinogens, inhalants) is common among individuals who are addicted to opioids, and such abuse or dependence may interfere with overall treatment adherence.

Patients who use or abuse more than one substance present unique problems and may need referral to resources outside the office setting for more intensive treatment. Patients should be encouraged to be truthful about their use of all drugs. A recent drug use history and a toxicology screen for drugs of abuse are guides to help assess use, abuse, and dependence on opioids and other drugs. Treatment of patients with more than one addiction problem will depend largely on the physician's level of comfort in treating addiction, the availability of psychosocial support and counseling, and the availability of other forms of addiction treatment. (See "Polysubstance Abuse" in chapter 5.)

## **Sedative-Hypnotics**

The use of sedative-hypnotics (benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and others) is a relative contraindication to treatment with buprenorphine because the combination (especially in overdose) has been reported to be associated with deaths ([Reynaud et al. 1998a,b](#)). The combination of buprenorphine and sedative-hypnotics may increase depression of the central nervous system. If treatment with buprenorphine and sedative-hypnotics is necessary, the doses of both medications may need to be lowered. Physicians must assess for use, intoxication, and withdrawal from sedative-hypnotics. Unfortunately, the use of certain benzodiazepines and other sedatives may not be detected on routine drug screens. Physicians must determine their laboratory's specific parameters for detection of sedative-hypnotic use.

## **Alcohol**

Because alcohol is a sedative-hypnotic drug, patients should be advised to abstain from alcohol while taking buprenorphine. Rarely are individuals with active, current alcohol dependence

appropriate candidates for office-based buprenorphine treatment. (It may be possible to treat such patients through initial, intensive services that effectively detoxify the patient from alcohol while concurrently starting buprenorphine [e.g., in an inpatient or residential setting].)

Patients may present with withdrawal symptoms from other drugs at the same time they are experiencing opioid withdrawal symptoms. Buprenorphine will not control seizures caused by withdrawal from alcohol or other sedative-hypnotic substances. Benzodiazepines and barbiturates, the most commonly used pharmacological treatments for seizures caused by alcohol or other sedative-hypnotic withdrawal, should be used only with caution in combination with buprenorphine because of the increased risk of central nervous system and respiratory depression from the combination.

## Summary

Patients who may be good candidates for opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine are those who have an objective diagnosis of opioid addiction, who have the appropriate understanding of and motivation for buprenorphine treatment, and who do not have medical or psychiatric contraindications to this form of treatment. This chapter has provided information on the questions, cautions, and contraindications that should be considered when determining whether a patient is an appropriate candidate for opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine. Chapter 4 describes the next steps in providing treatment with buprenorphine for opioid addiction.

### Footnotes

For additional information, see the CSAT publication entitled *Classifying Skin Lesions of Injection Drug Users: A Method for Corroborating Disease Risk*, NCADI Order No. AVD 154, DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 02-3753, Printed 2002. Order from: <http://store.health.org/>.

# TIP 40: 4 Treatment Protocols

## Overview

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Office-based treatment of opioid addiction has been unavailable in the United States since the early 1900s. Thus, most U.S. physicians today have little or no experience in the management of opioid addiction. As a consequence, physicians often treat substance-*related* disorders (e.g., infectious diseases) without having the resources to treat the concurrent substance-*use* disorder itself. With the introduction of buprenorphine, office-based physicians now will have the ability to treat both the complications of opioid addiction and opioid addiction itself. (For articles on managing opioid-dependent patients in the office setting, please see ([Fiellin et al. 2001](#); [Fiellin and O'Connor 2002](#); [O'Connor et al. 1996, 1998](#)))

Physicians who use buprenorphine to treat opioid addiction must consider the entire process of treatment, from induction, through stabilization, and then maintenance. At each stage of the process, many different factors must be considered if the physician is to provide comprehensive and maximally effective opioid addiction care. Physicians should conduct a comprehensive assessment to understand the nature of an individual's addiction problem, especially with regard to the primary type of opioid abused. Before initiating buprenorphine treatment, physicians should obtain a signed release of information (see Title 42, Part 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations [42 C.F.R. Part 2]) from patients who are currently enrolled in Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs) or other programs (42 C.F.R. Part 2 2001). (See "Confidentiality and Privacy" in chapter 6.) This chapter provides detailed protocols on the use of buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid addiction. The chapter begins with a discussion of some general issues regarding treatment with buprenorphine.

## Buprenorphine Monotherapy and Combination Buprenorphine/Naloxone Treatment

The consensus panel recommends that the buprenorphine/naloxone combination be used for induction treatment (and for stabilization and maintenance) for most patients. However,

pregnant women who are determined to be appropriate candidates for buprenorphine treatment should be inducted and maintained on buprenorphine monotherapy. In addition, patients who desire to change from long-acting opioids (e.g., methadone, levo-alpha-acetyl-methadol [LAAM]) to buprenorphine should be inducted using buprenorphine monotherapy.<sup>2</sup> If the buprenorphine monotherapy formulation is elected for induction treatment, it is recommended that patients who are not pregnant be switched to the buprenorphine/naloxone combination form as early in treatment as possible to minimize the possibility of diversion of Subutex® to abuse via the injection route. When the buprenorphine monotherapy formulation is used for induction, it is recommended that it be used for no more than 2 days before switching to the buprenorphine/naloxone combination formulation (for patients who are not pregnant). If buprenorphine alone is to be used for extended periods, the number of doses to be prescribed should be limited, and the use of the monotherapy formulation should be justified in the medical record.

Although controlled trials have not compared buprenorphine monotherapy to the buprenorphine/naloxone combination for induction, clinical experience in office-based trials conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has demonstrated that physicians were comfortable starting patients on either the monotherapy formulation or the combination formulation and did not report adverse events when patients began directly on combination treatment. Physicians will need to find their own comfort level with the induction protocols, but the consensus panel sees no contraindication to the use of the buprenorphine/naloxone combination in the initiation of buprenorphine treatment, except as noted above.

## Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome With Buprenorphine Induction

Because buprenorphine (and particularly buprenorphine/naloxone) can precipitate an opioid withdrawal syndrome if administered to a patient who is opioid dependent and whose receptors are currently occupied by opioids, a patient should no longer be intoxicated or have any residual opioid effect from his or her last dose of opioid before receiving a first dose of buprenorphine.

Due to this required abstinence before initiating buprenorphine treatment, it is likely that patients will feel that they are experiencing the early stages of withdrawal when they present for buprenorphine induction treatment, unless they are on maintenance treatment with a long-acting opioid agonist (e.g., methadone). If a patient has early symptoms of withdrawal, then the opioid receptors are unlikely to be occupied fully; precipitated withdrawal from administration of buprenorphine will be avoided, and the efficacy of buprenorphine in alleviating withdrawal symptoms can be assessed more easily.

Withdrawal symptoms can occur if either too much or too little buprenorphine is administered (i.e., *spontaneous withdrawal* if too little buprenorphine is given, *precipitated withdrawal* if buprenorphine is administered while the opioid receptors are occupied to a high degree by an opioid agonist). Therefore, physicians must be careful when timing initiation of buprenorphine induction. Each patient's history and concerns must be considered carefully, and patient counseling about potential side effects from buprenorphine overdosing (especially in combination with benzodiazepines) or underdosing (e.g., a reemergence of opioid craving) must be emphasized. Before undertaking buprenorphine treatment of opioid addiction, physicians should be familiar with the signs, symptoms, and time course of the opioid withdrawal syndrome. (See figure 3-7.)

## Method of Administration

Buprenorphine sublingual tablets should be placed under the tongue until they are dissolved. For doses requiring the use of more than two tablets, patients should either place all the tablets at once or alternatively, if they cannot fit in more than two tablets comfortably, place two tablets at a time under the tongue. Either way, the tablets should be held under the tongue until they dissolve; swallowing the tablets reduces the bioavailability of the drug. To ensure consistency in bioavailability, patients should follow the same manner of dosing with continued use of the medication. Dissolution rates vary, but, on average, the sublingual tablets should dissolve in approximately 5–10 minutes.

## Treatment Approach

There are two general approaches to the medication-assisted treatment of opioid addiction: (1) opioid maintenance treatment, and (2) medically supervised withdrawal (detoxification) with either opioid (e.g., methadone) or nonopioid (e.g., clonidine) medications. Because opioid-assisted maintenance and medically supervised withdrawal treatments have not been available outside the OTP setting, many patients may not be aware that these forms of treatment are now available in new clinical settings. Thus, a discussion with patients of all available treatment options is essential.

For many patients, it may be inappropriate to decide arbitrarily on the length of treatment at initial evaluation. It is more likely that patients will need to be started in treatment within a flexible timeframe that responds to the progress and needs of the patient. For example, in one report of rapid-term opioid detoxification using buprenorphine, it was noted that 25 percent of patients initially requesting detoxification subsequently switched to maintenance treatment within the 10-day study ([Vignau 1998](#)). Thus, as treatment progresses, it may become a more appropriate time to assess the duration of various aspects of treatment, including medications, counseling therapies, and self-help groups. Therefore, it is important to assess initially, and to reassess periodically, a patient's motivation for treatment, as well as his or her willingness to engage in appropriate counseling and/or a structured rehabilitation program. (See "Assessment" in chapter 3.)

## Maintenance Treatment With Buprenorphine

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The three phases of maintenance treatment with buprenorphine for opioid addiction are (1) induction, (2) stabilization, and (3) maintenance. The following sections describe these phases.

### Induction Phase

Buprenorphine induction (usual duration approximately 1 week), the first phase of treatment, involves helping a patient begin the process of switching from the opioids of abuse to buprenorphine. The goal of the induction phase is to find the minimum dose of buprenorphine at which the patient discontinues or markedly diminishes use of other opioids and experiences no



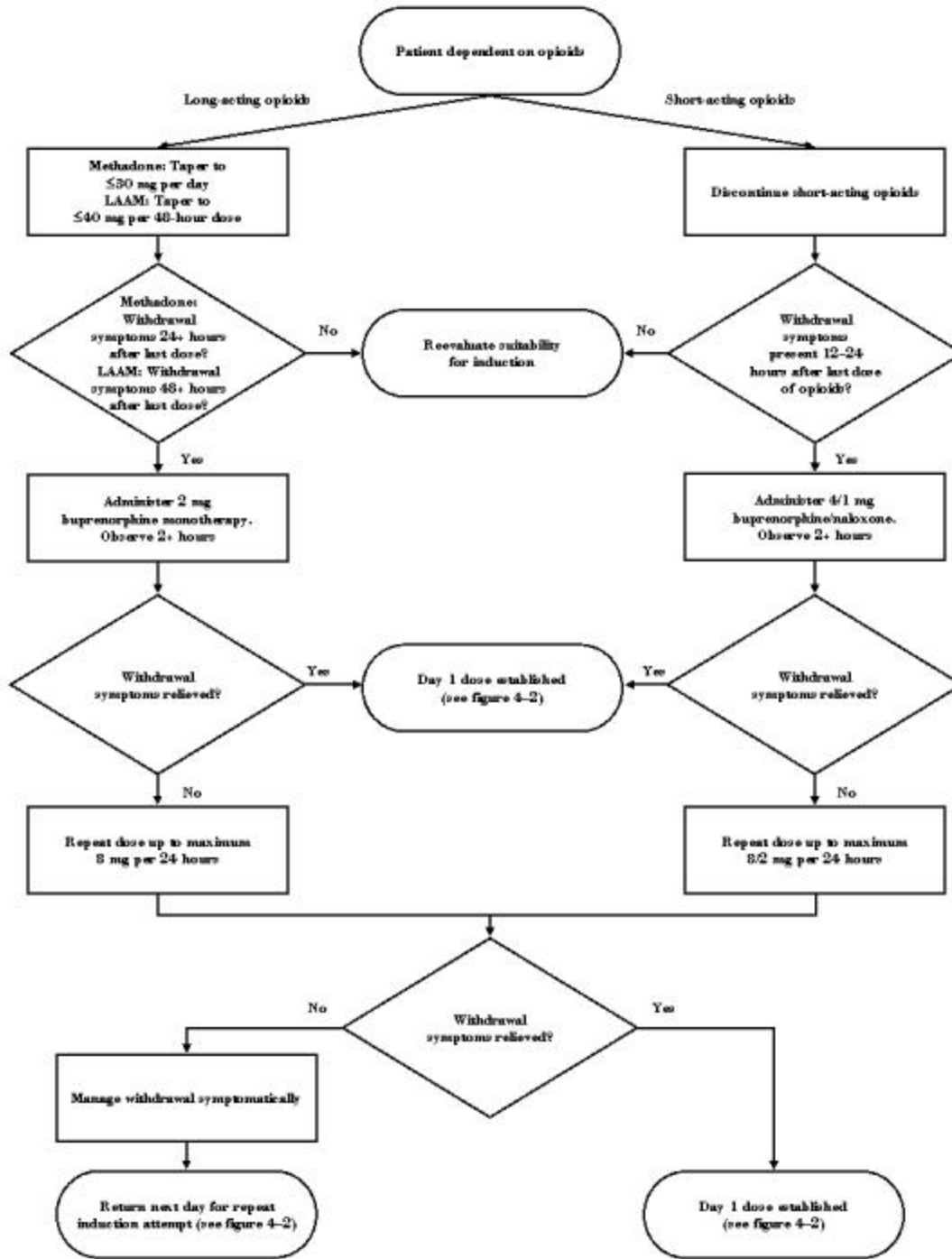
withdrawal symptoms, minimal or no side effects, and no uncontrollable cravings for drugs of abuse. The physician should assess for signs and symptoms of withdrawal or inadequate dosing during induction. Patients should be advised to avoid driving or operating other machinery until they are familiar with the effects of buprenorphine and their dose is stabilized. Induction protocols differ, depending on the type of opioid to which the patient is addicted (e.g., short- or long-acting) and whether or not the patient is in active withdrawal at the time of induction.

The consensus panel recommends that physicians administer initial induction doses as observed treatment (e.g., in the office); further doses may be provided via prescription thereafter. This ensures that the amount of buprenorphine located in the physician's office is kept to a minimum. Following the initial buprenorphine dose, patients should be observed in the physician's office for up to 2 hours. For patients who do not experience excessive opioid agonist symptoms after the initial dose, induction protocols can be followed as described below.

### Induction Days 1 and 2: Who Is the Patient and What Does He or She Need?



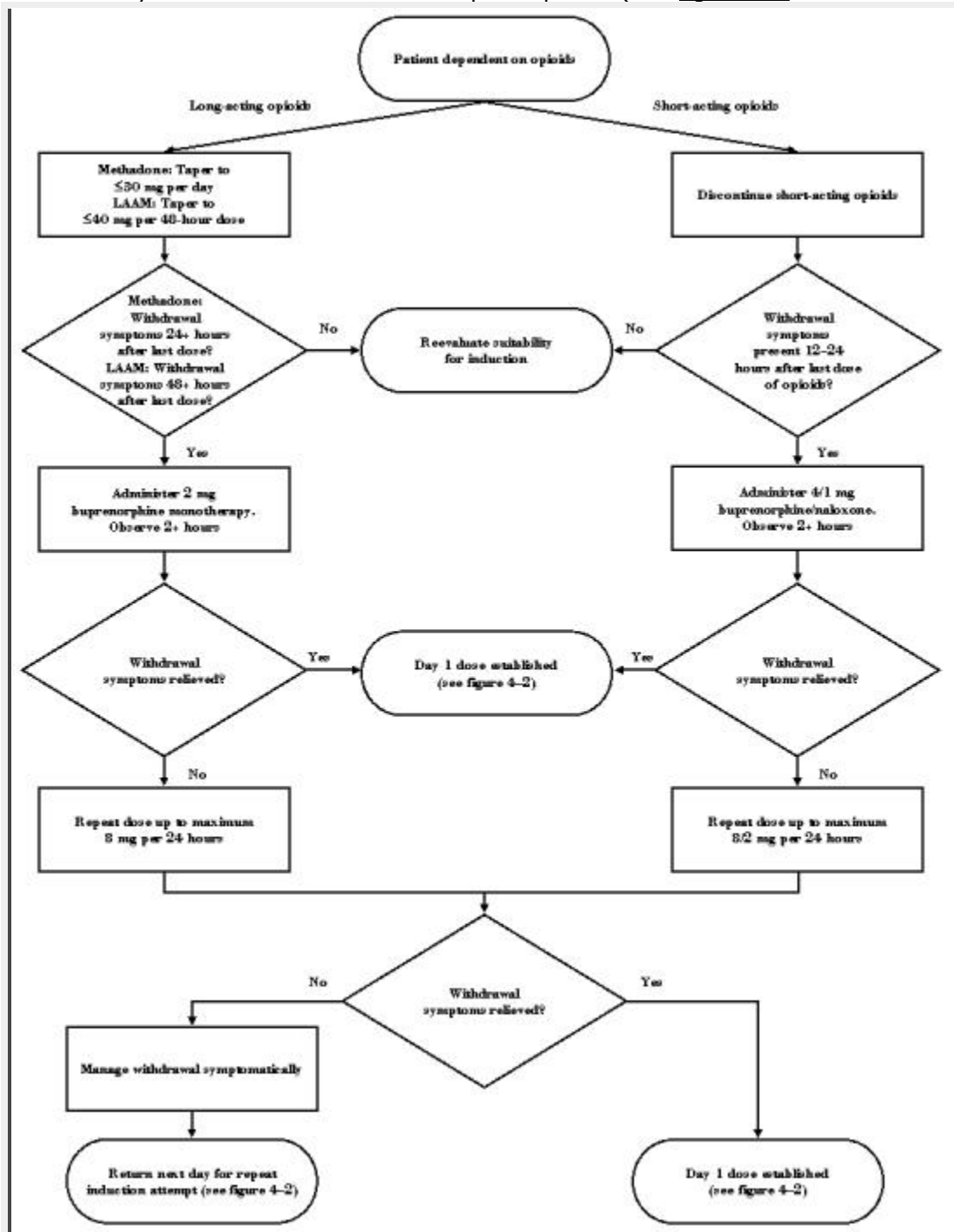
Figure 4-1. Induction Days 1-2



**Figure 4-1. Induction Days 1-2**

It is important to identify the opioid(s) that patients have been using, as the response to buprenorphine treatment in individuals dependent on long-acting opioids is different than that seen with short-acting opioids and, therefore, the appropriate induction protocol must be chosen.

Most patients starting buprenorphine induction will be physically dependent on a short-acting opioid (e.g., heroin, oxycodone, hydrocodone) and should be in the early stages of withdrawal at the time they receive their first dose of buprenorphine. (See [figure 4-1](#)



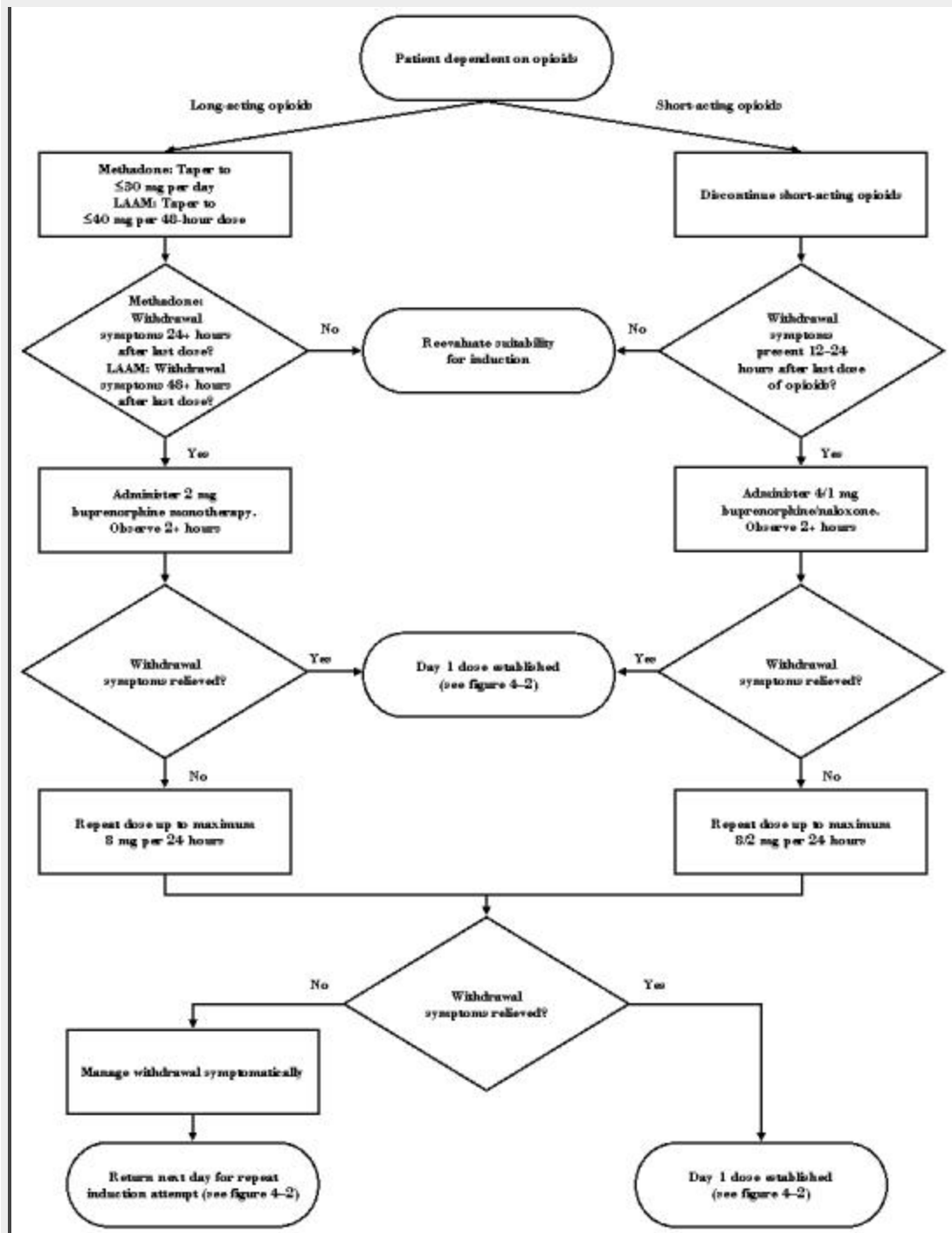
and

[appendix B.](#))

## **Patients Dependent on Short-Acting Opioids**

Before the initial buprenorphine induction dose is administered to a patient dependent on short-acting opioids, a minimum of 12–24 hours should have elapsed since the last use of opioids. The patient should preferably be exhibiting early signs of opioid withdrawal (e.g., sweating, yawning, rhinorrhea, lacrimation). (See figure 3-7.) Patients who are not in active withdrawal because they have not abstained from using opioids for a sufficient period should receive a careful explanation of the advantages of waiting and should be urged to wait until they begin to experience the symptoms of withdrawal.

Patients who are experiencing objective signs of opioid withdrawal and whose last use of a short-acting opioid was more than 12–24 hours prior to the initiation of induction can receive a first dose of 4/1–8/2 mg of the buprenorphine/naloxone combination (buprenorphine monotherapy for pregnant women). (See [figure 4-1](#)



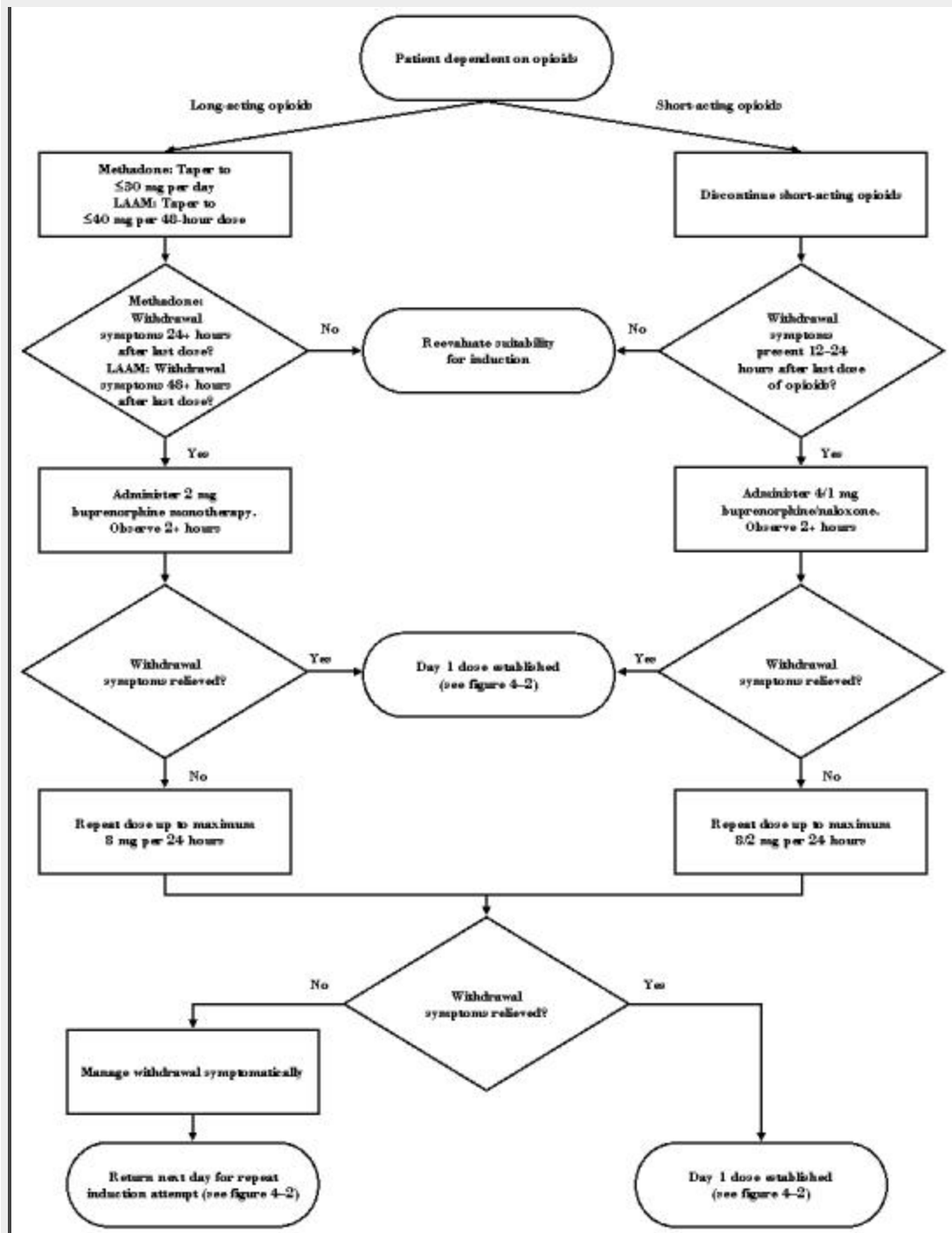
.) If the

initial dose of the buprenorphine/naloxone combination is 4/1 mg and opioid withdrawal symptoms subside but then return (or are still present) after 2 hours, a second dose of 4/1 mg can be administered. The total amount of buprenorphine administered in the first day should not exceed 8 mg.

## **Patients Dependent on Long-Acting Opioids**

Induction onto buprenorphine from long-acting opioids (e.g., methadone, LAAM) may be complicated and is best managed by physicians experienced with this procedure. If this treatment will be conducted in an office-based setting, the physician's office must contact the patient's OTP (after receiving signed consent) to determine the methadone or LAAM dosage levels and time of last dose. Such contact will ensure that the physician knows the exact quantity and time of the last methadone or LAAM dose, as well as prevent patients from receiving opioid agonist treatment (OAT) and office-based buprenorphine treatment simultaneously. To allow this exchange of addiction treatment information per Federal confidentiality regulation 42 C.F.R. Part 2 (see "Confidentiality and Privacy" in chapter 6), the patient must provide signed consent to both the OTP and the buprenorphine-treating physician.

For patients taking methadone, the methadone dose should be tapered to 30 mg or less per day for a minimum of 1 week before initiating buprenorphine induction treatment. Patients should not receive buprenorphine until at least 24 hours after the last dose of methadone. The first dose of buprenorphine should be 2 mg of the monotherapy formulation. (See [figure 4-1](#)



.) If a

patient develops signs or symptoms of withdrawal after the first dose, a second dose of 2 mg should be administered and repeated, if necessary, to a maximum of 8 mg buprenorphine on Day 1.

It should be noted that not all patients maintained on methadone may be good candidates for the switch to buprenorphine treatment at a methadone dose of 30 mg/day. As a methadone taper approaches 30 mg/day many patients become uncomfortable, develop withdrawal symptoms, and are at increased risk of relapse to opioid abuse. Such patients may request the transfer to buprenorphine at higher daily doses of methadone. The decision to transfer a patient to buprenorphine at higher daily methadone doses should be based on clinician judgment, informed by the patient's subjective and objective findings. While there have been case reports of transferring patients to buprenorphine from methadone doses as high as 80 mg/day, there is insufficient data to formulate recommendations regarding which patients may be able to tolerate a switch at these higher doses or the best way to manage the transfer.

No clinical experience with inducing patients from LAAM to buprenorphine is documented. However, extrapolating from consensus panel members' experience with such patients, the panel recommends that the dose of LAAM be tapered down to 40 mg or less per 48-hour dose, and buprenorphine induction should not be undertaken until at least 48 hours after the last dose of LAAM. Induction should then proceed in the same manner and at the same dosage levels as recommended for methadone patients.

### **Induction Management When Withdrawal Symptoms Are Not Relieved by 8 mg Buprenorphine in the First 24 Hours**

If withdrawal symptoms are still not relieved after a total of 8 mg of buprenorphine on Day 1, symptomatic relief with nonopioid medications should be provided and the patient asked to return the following day for dose management. (See "Induction Day 2 and Forward" below.)

### **Patients Not Physically Dependent on Opioids**

Patients who are not physically dependent on opioids but who have a known history of opioid addiction, have failed other treatment modalities, and have a demonstrated need to cease the use of opioids, may be candidates for buprenorphine treatment. Patients in this category will be the exception rather than the rule, however. Other patients in this category would be those



recently released from a controlled environment who have a known history of opioid addiction and a high potential for relapse.

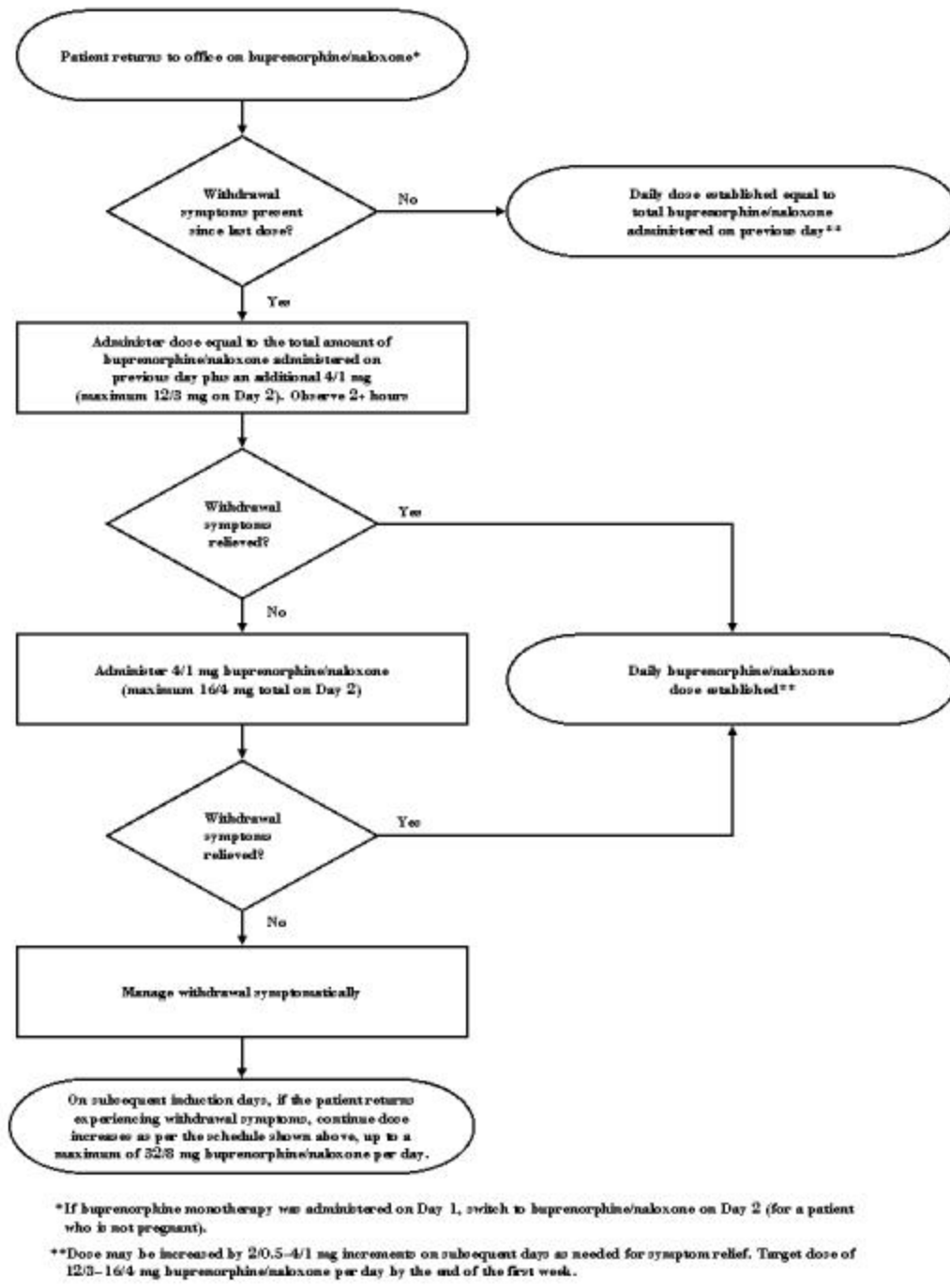
Patients who are not physically dependent on opioids should receive the lowest possible dose (2/0.5 mg) of buprenorphine/naloxone for induction treatment.

### Induction Day 2 and Forward

If buprenorphine monotherapy was administered on Day 1, switch to buprenorphine/naloxone on Day 2 (for a patient who is not pregnant).



Figure 4-2. Induction Day 2 Forward



**Figure 4-2. Induction Day 2 Forward**

Patients who return on Day 2 experiencing withdrawal symptoms should receive an initial dose of buprenorphine/naloxone equivalent to the total amount of buprenorphine/naloxone (or buprenorphine) administered on Day 1

plus an additional 4/1 mg (maximum initial dose of 12/3 mg). If withdrawal symptoms are still present 2 hours after the dose, an additional 4/1 mg dose can be administered. The total dose on Day 2 should not exceed 16/4 mg. Continue dose increases on subsequent days according to the induction schedule shown in [figure 4-2](#) up to a maximum of 32/8 mg per day.

If patients have problems adjusting to buprenorphine (e.g., experience withdrawal symptoms or continue to feel compelled to use illicit drugs), the dose may need to be increased more rapidly, or to a higher maintenance dose level, and patients may need intensive psychosocial treatments to help them cease illicit use. Patients who continue to take illicit opioids should be warned strongly of the dangers of continuing to do so. Physicians also should verify that patients are taking the medication correctly and should assess the timing of doses in relation to last opioid use, amount of time the medication is allowed to dissolve under the tongue, and dose taken. If a dose of buprenorphine makes a patient feel worse, it is likely that the medication is causing precipitated withdrawal. In this situation, the physician should help the patient to decrease the use of the illicit opioid while gradually increasing the dose of buprenorphine. Toxicology testing for drugs of abuse may be helpful in determining adequacy of clinical response.

For patients who do not experience any difficulties with the first day of buprenorphine dosing, and who are not experiencing withdrawal symptoms on Day 2, the induction schedule shown in

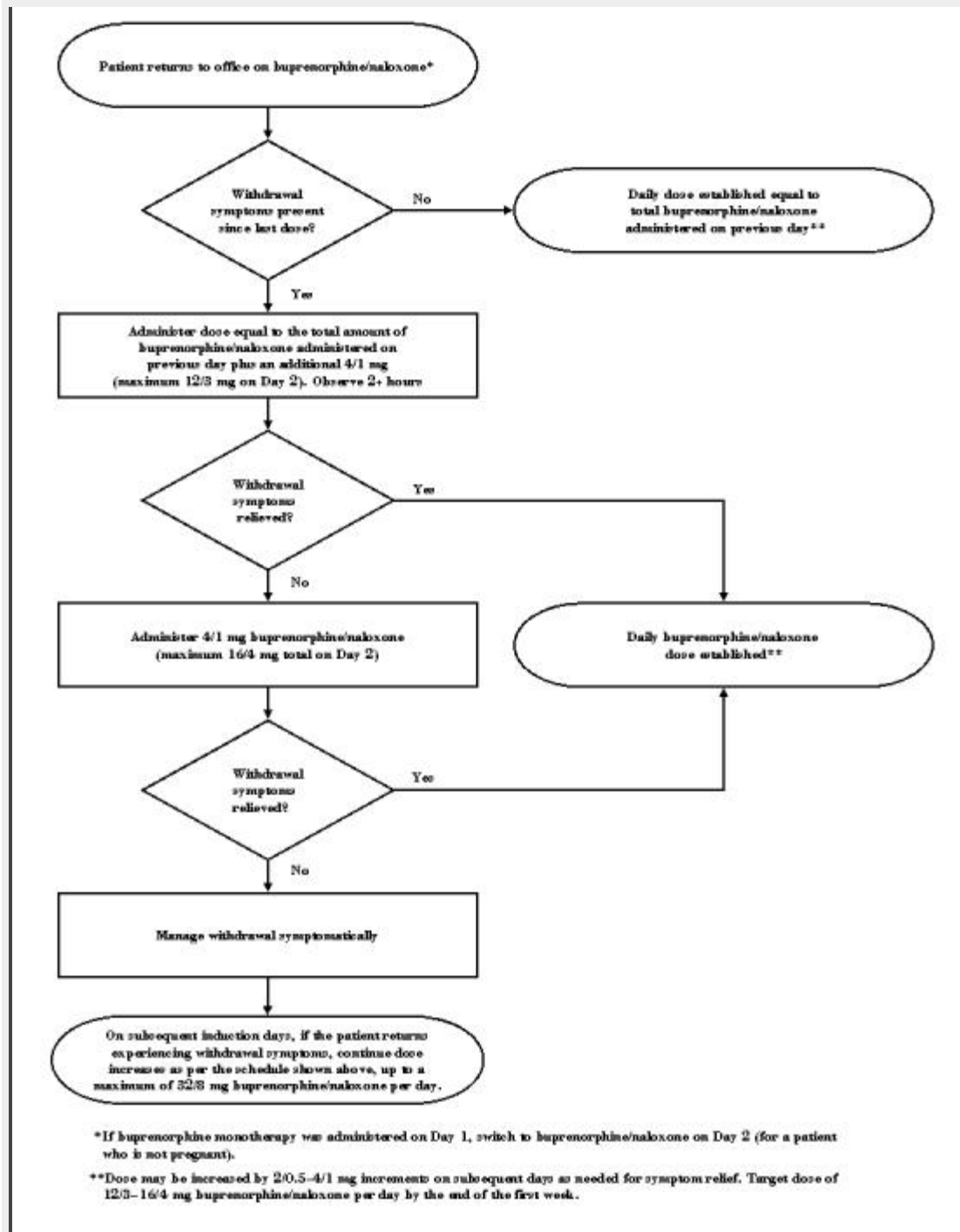


figure 4-2

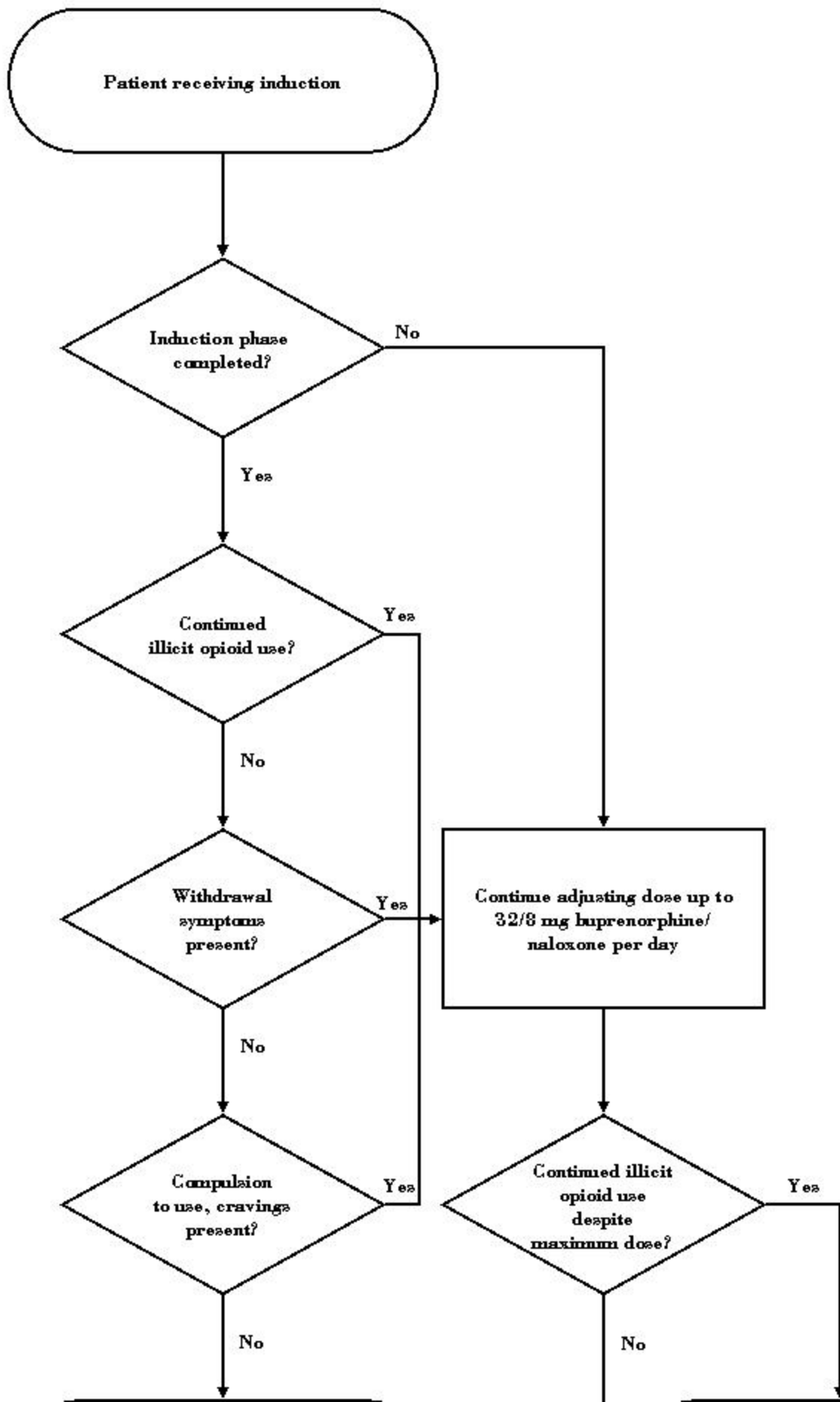
can be followed. The daily buprenorphine/naloxone dose is established as equivalent to the total amount of buprenorphine/naloxone (or buprenorphine) that was administered on Day 1. Doses may be subsequently increased in 2/0.5 to 4/1 mg increments each day, if needed for symptomatic relief, with a target dose of 12/3 to 16/4 mg per day to be achieved within the first

week, unless side effects occur. If side effects occur, the dose of buprenorphine should be maintained or lowered until these side effects disappear.

### Stabilization Phase



Figure 4-3. Stabilization Phase



### Figure 4-3. Stabilization Phase

Dosage adjustments may be necessary during early stabilization, and frequent contact with patients increases the likelihood of compliance. Until full stabilization is achieved, weekly assessments of patients may be indicated to make necessary dosage adjustments. With stabilization goals in mind, doses of buprenorphine/naloxone may be increased in 2/0.5–4/1 mg increments per week until stabilization is achieved. Nearly all patients will stabilize on daily doses of 16/4–24/6 mg; some, however, may require up to 32/8 mg daily.

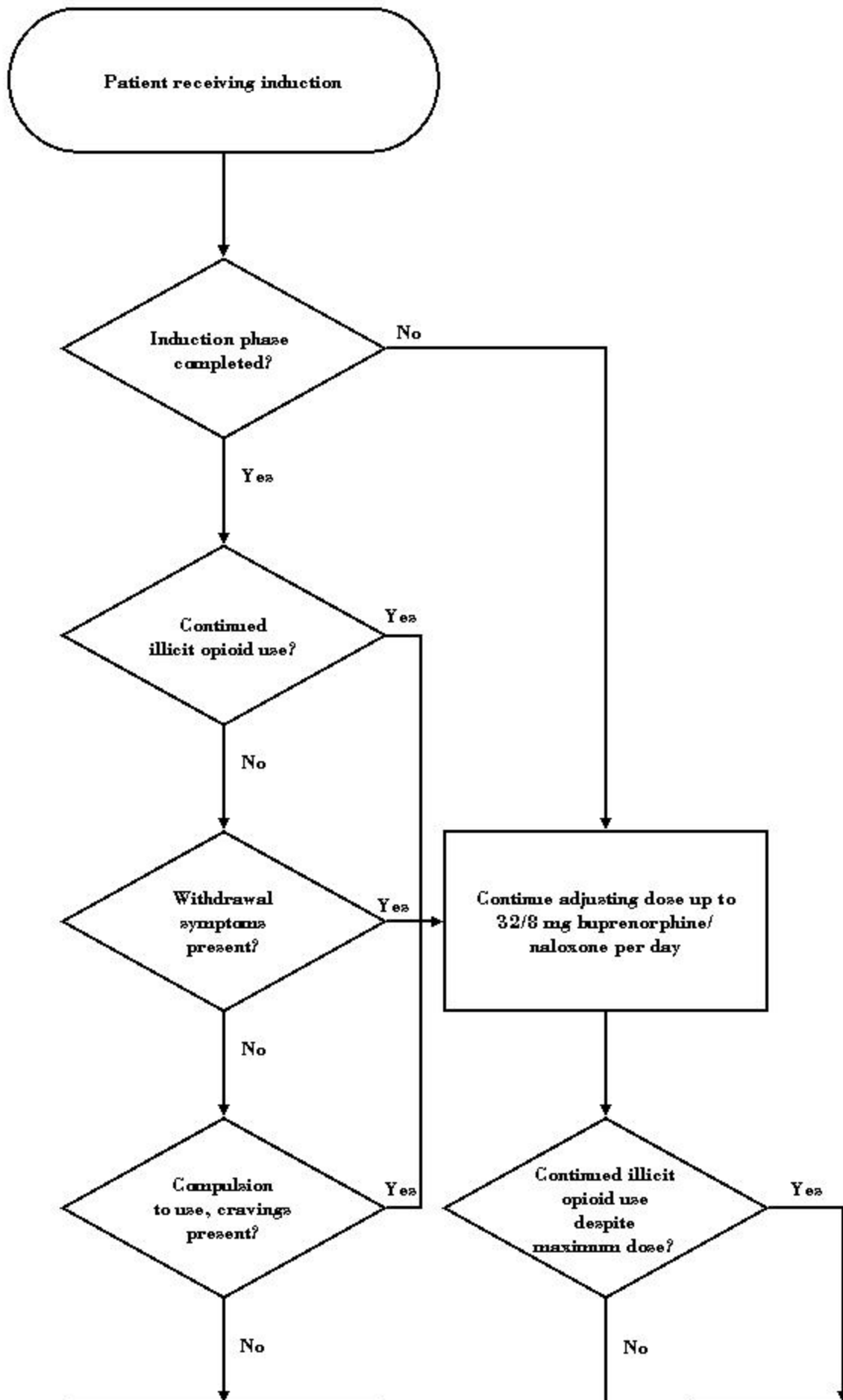
Some patients may prefer or may respond better to less-than-daily dosing regimens of buprenorphine. It is possible that less-than-daily dosing will most likely be advantageous in an OTP or other directly observed dose setting, where daily visits might otherwise be required. A variety of studies have shown the efficacy of alternate-day or thrice-weekly buprenorphine administration (Amass et al. 2000; Bickel et al. 1999; Perez de los Cobos et al. 2000; Petry et al. 1999). The typical method of determining the dose for less-than-daily dosing regimens was to double (for alternate-day dosing) or triple (for every-third-day dosing) the stable daily dose for the patient. Although all regimens were determined to be safe and, in most cases, effective, several authors noted that some subjects were more likely to have urine samples positive for opioids on the less-than-daily dosing regimens. During induction and early stabilization daily dosing is recommended.

If a patient continues to use illicit opioids despite the maximal treatment available in the physician's clinical setting, the physician should consider referral to a more intensive therapeutic environment.

The induction phase is completed and the stabilization phase (usual duration approximately 1 to 2 months) is begun when the patient is experiencing no withdrawal symptoms, is experiencing minimal or no side effects, and no longer has uncontrollable cravings for opioid agonists. (See

figure 4-3





.) As with any pharmacotherapy, the goal of buprenorphine treatment is to treat with the minimum dose of medication needed to address target signs, symptoms, desired benefits, and laboratory indices while minimizing side effects. Elimination of objective evidence of opioid use (negative toxicology) represents the key target sign for which to strive. The goal is to reduce self-reported cravings and self-reported use of illicit opioids. One benefit worth achieving is a self-reported increase in opioid blockade such that self-administered illicit opioids induce little or no euphoria. A reduction in opioid-positive toxicology specimens confirms a successful direction in treatment.

## Maintenance Phase

The longest period that a patient is on buprenorphine is the period of maintenance. This period may be indefinite. It is easy for physicians to lessen their vigilance during this period, but significant considerations still must be addressed. Attention must be maintained to the psychosocial and family issues that have been identified during the course of treatment. Other issues that will need continual monitoring are related to cravings for opioids and to preventing relapse. Some other issues related to opioid abuse that need to be addressed during maintenance treatment include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Psychiatric comorbidity
- Somatic consequences of drug use
- Family and support issues
- Structuring of time in prosocial activities
- Employment and financial issues
- Legal consequences of drug use
- Other drug and alcohol abuse

The frequent presence of some or all of these problems underscores the importance of providing nonpharmacological services to address comprehensively the needs of patients and to maximize the chances of the best possible outcomes.

## Long-Term Medication Management

The design of long-term treatment depends in part on the patient's personal treatment goals and in part on objective signs of treatment success. Maintenance can be relatively short-term (e.g., <12 months) or a lifetime process. Treatment success depends on the achievement of specific goals that are agreed on by both the patient and the physician. Following successful stabilization, decisions to decrease or discontinue buprenorphine should be based on a patient's desires and commitment to becoming medication-free, and on the physician's confidence that tapering would be successful. Factors to be considered when determining suitability for long-term medication-free status include stable housing and income, adequate psychosocial support, and the absence of legal problems. For patients who have not achieved these indices of stabilization, a longer period of maintenance, during which they work through any barriers that exist, may be appropriate. Data suggest that longer duration of medication treatment is associated with less illicit drug use and fewer complications.

## Opioid Detoxification With Buprenorphine

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This section discusses the use of buprenorphine for the medically supervised withdrawal (detoxification) from short-acting opioids and from OAT with methadone or LAAM. The goal of medically supervised withdrawal from opioids is to provide a smooth transition from a physically dependent to a physically nondependent state. A patient can then engage in further rehabilitation with or without the use of opioid antagonist treatment to assist in relapse prevention. Before considering the use of buprenorphine for withdrawal from illicit opioids or to discontinue OAT, a patient's appropriateness as a candidate for withdrawal or cessation must be determined at the time of assessment. Withdrawal treatment must be followed by long-term drug-free, or naltrexone, treatment in order to minimize the risk of relapse to opioid abuse. It should be noted, however, that absent a compelling need for the complete avoidance of all opioids, long-term maintenance treatment with buprenorphine is to be preferred in most instances to any form of detoxification or withdrawal treatment.

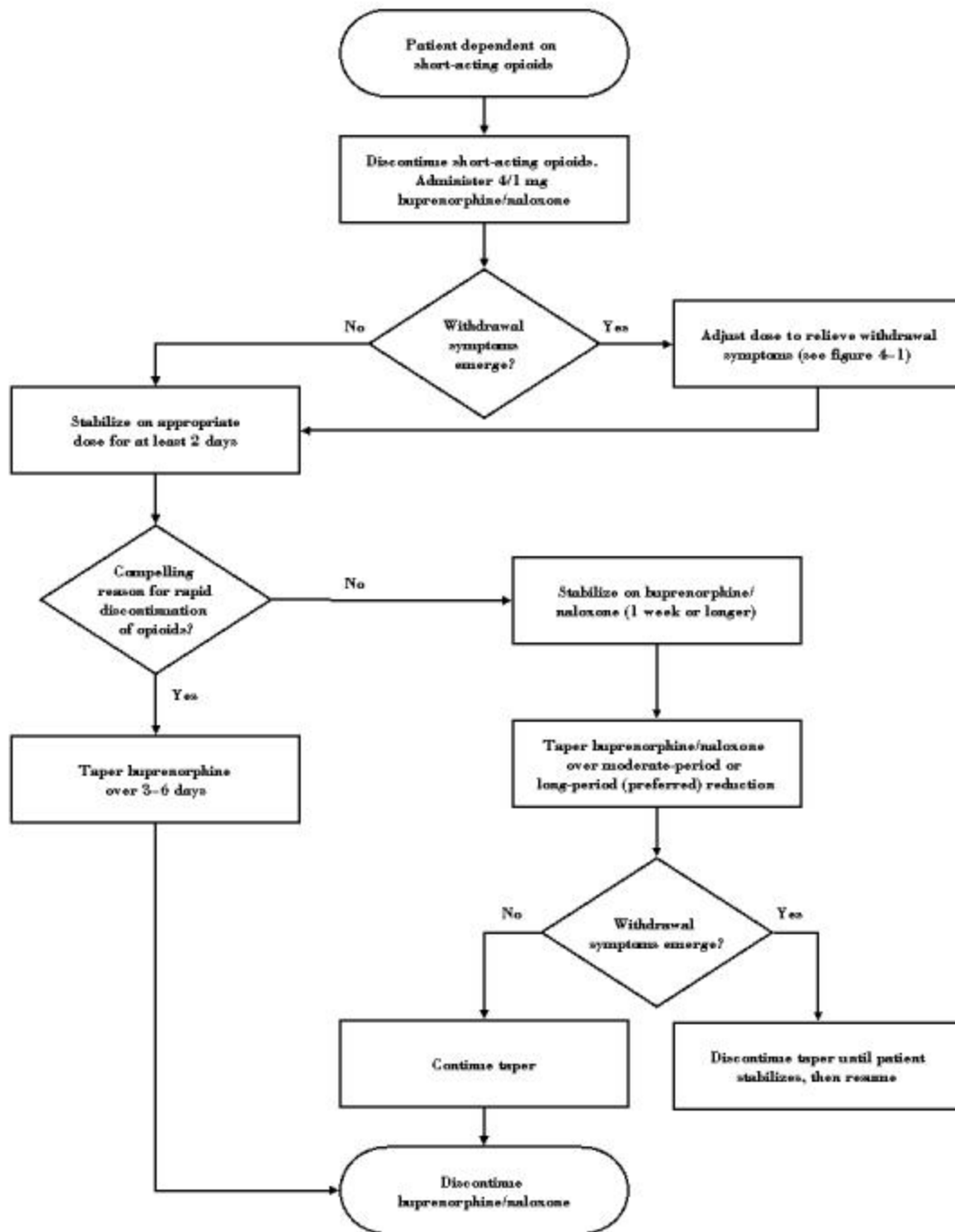
## Buprenorphine for Detoxification From Short-Acting Opioids

Detoxification in patients addicted to short-acting opioids is only a part of the overall approach to treatment. The purpose of using buprenorphine for detoxification from short-acting opioids is to provide a transition from the state of physical dependence on opioids to an opioid-free state, while minimizing withdrawal symptoms (and avoiding side effects of buprenorphine).

## Induction Phase



Figure 4-4. Detoxification From Short-Acting (more...)

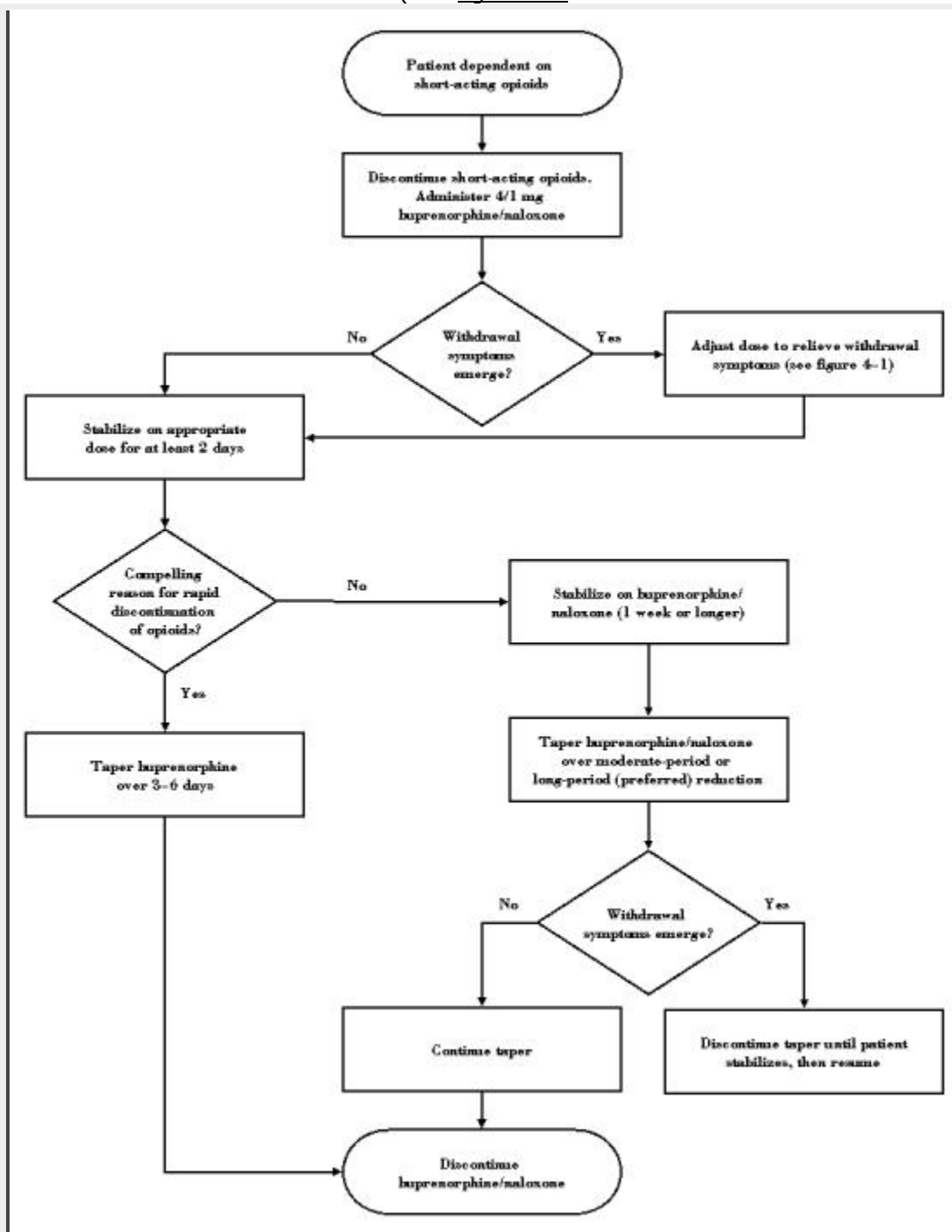


**Figure 4-4. Detoxification From Short-Acting Opioids**

The consensus panel recommends that patients dependent on short-acting opioids be induced directly onto buprenorphine/naloxone tablets. Before initiating buprenorphine induction, patients should have discontinued the use of illicit opioids and should be exhibiting the early symptoms of

withdrawal. An initial 4/1 mg dose of buprenorphine/naloxone is recommended. This dose can be followed in 2–4 hours with a second dose of 4/1 mg, if indicated. Over the next 2 days, the dose of buprenorphine/naloxone should be increased to 12/3–16/4 mg per day. The objectives of induction should be to stabilize the patient as rapidly as possible, to minimize any withdrawal symptoms, and to eliminate further use of illicit opioids. Only after a patient has completely discontinued use of illicit opioids should the dose-reduction phase begin. Unless a patient is in a controlled environment (e.g., a hospital or residential setting), cessation of opioid use should be documented with a negative toxicology test for illicit opioids. If a patient is unable to discontinue illicit opioid use, as documented by negative toxicology results, a further period of stabilization or

maintenance should be considered. (See figure 4-4



## Dose Reduction Phase

*Long-Period Reduction.* The literature suggests that the use of buprenorphine for gradual detoxification over long periods is probably more effective than its use for rapid detoxification

over short or moderate periods; however, little research has been conducted on this use of buprenorphine. Patients who are unwilling or unable to engage actively in rehabilitation services without agonist support may not be appropriate candidates for short-term detoxification; however, such patients may benefit from long-term detoxification (or, even more so, from maintenance treatment).

*Moderate-Period Reduction.* Patients without a compelling need to undergo short-term detoxification, but with a desire to become opioid free and to engage in rehabilitation aimed at an opioid-free lifestyle, can be detoxified over a 10- to 14-day (or longer) period by gradually decreasing the initial stabilization dose of buprenorphine (usually 8–16 mg per day) by 2 mg every 2–3 days. It is extremely important that patients engage in rehabilitation programs during the detoxification period and that they remain engaged in such programs after the conclusion of the detoxification protocol.

*Short-Period Reduction.* Patients with a compelling reason to achieve an opioid-free state quickly (e.g., impending incarceration, foreign travel, job requirement) may have their buprenorphine dose reduced over 3 days and then discontinued. When compared to clonidine for the treatment of short-term opioid withdrawal, buprenorphine is better accepted by patients and more effective in relieving withdrawal symptoms ([Cheskin et al. 1994](#)). Relapse rates and long-term outcomes from such rapid opioid withdrawal using buprenorphine have not been reported, however. Studies of other withdrawal modalities have shown that such brief withdrawal periods are (1) unlikely to result in long-term abstinence and (2) produce minimal, if any, long-term benefits in the treatment of patients dependent on opioids.

## Buprenorphine for Discontinuation of OAT

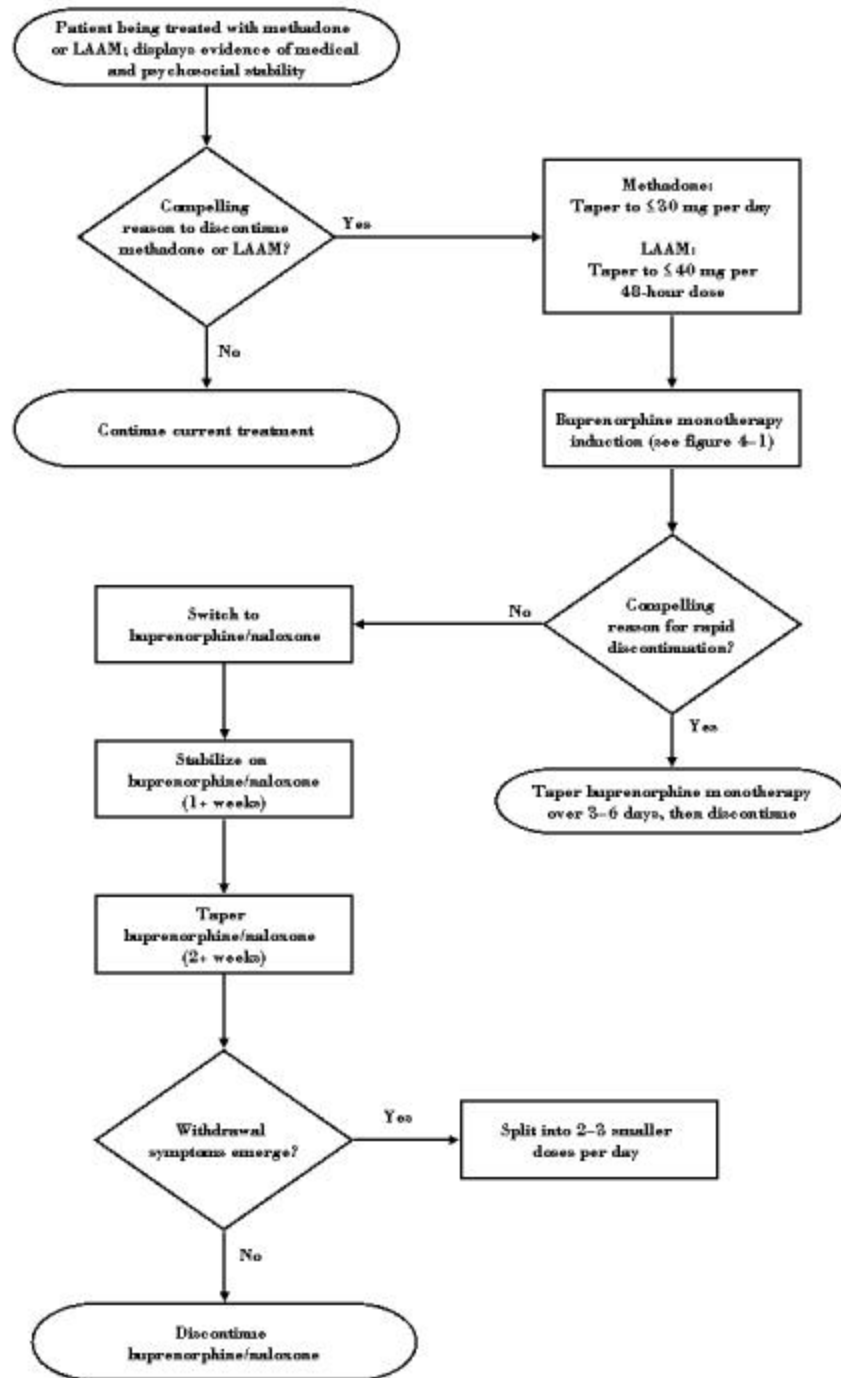
The use of buprenorphine (either as buprenorphine monotherapy or as buprenorphine/naloxone combination treatment) to taper off OAT with methadone or LAAM should be considered only for those patients who have evidence of sustained medical and psychosocial stability. Requests to provide pharmacological withdrawal with buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone should be entertained with caution. Only a small proportion of patients who have achieved stability with



OAT are likely to maintain abstinence without medication. Ideally, this decision would be made in conjunction, and in coordination, with a patient's OTP. The option of continued maintenance with buprenorphine/naloxone if withdrawal proves unsuccessful should be discussed.



Figure 4-5. Discontinuation of OAT Using Buprenorphine (more...)

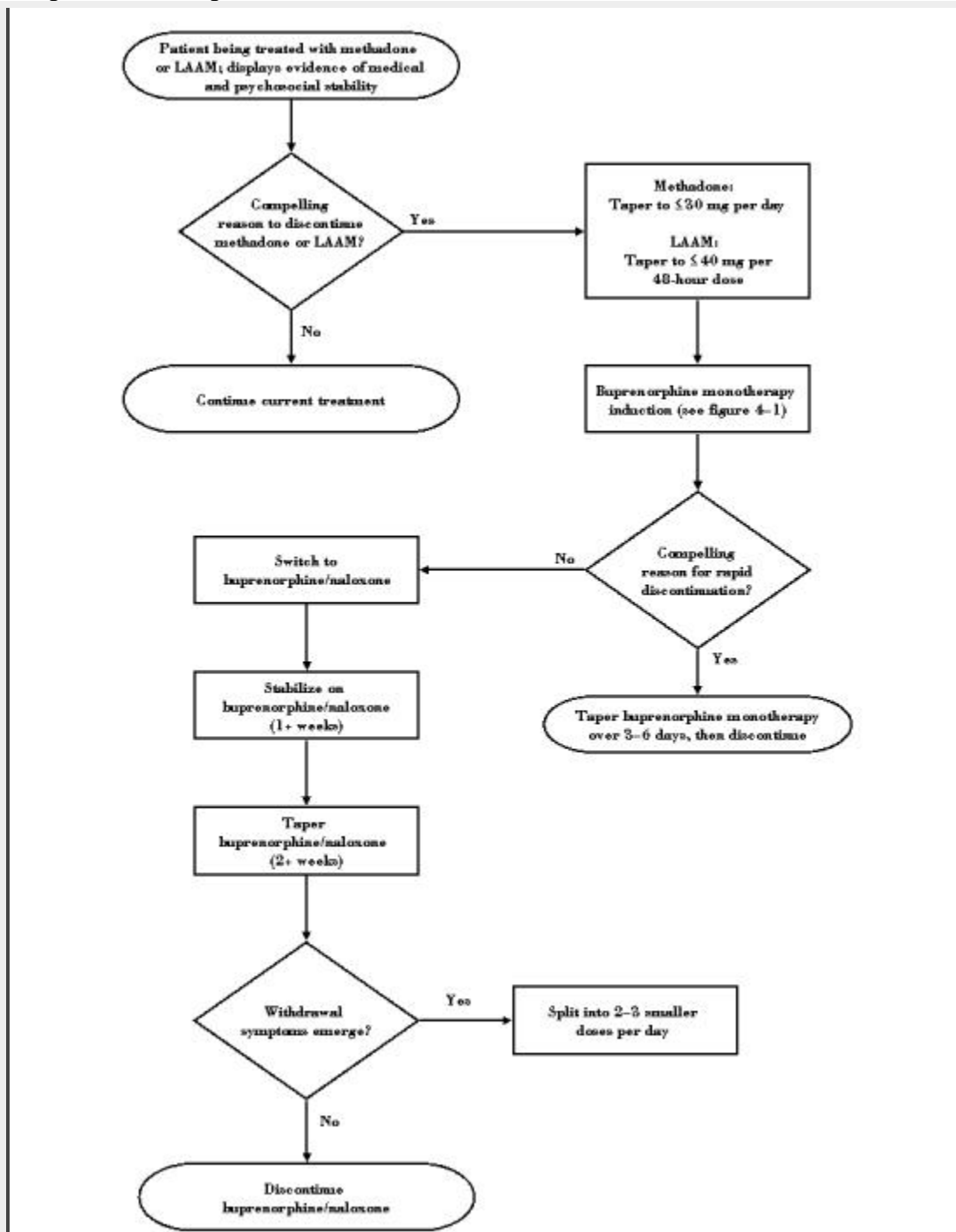


**Figure 4-5. Discontinuation of OAT Using Buprenorphine**

Compelling reasons for discontinuing OAT within a relatively short timeframe might include impending incarceration, foreign travel, conditions of

employment, or other circumstances expected to preclude the patient from continuing OAT.

The guidelines in figure 4-5



describe

both short-period (3-day) and moderate-period (2-week) discontinuation of OAT with

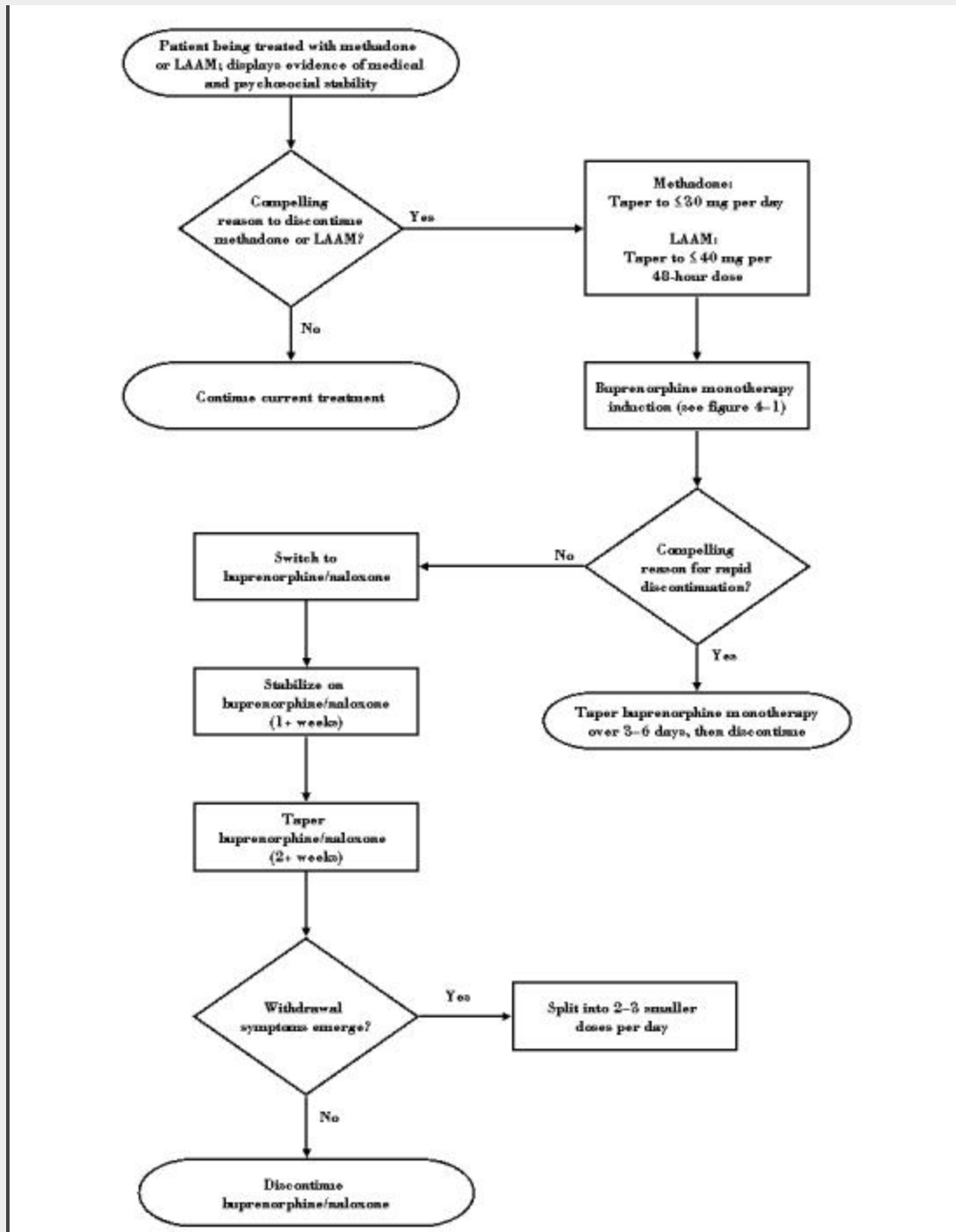
buprenorphine. Short-period discontinuation is not recommended unless there is a compelling need for rapid discontinuation.

### **Methadone Discontinuation**

In general, patients who are clinically stable and are being slowly tapered off methadone maintenance treatment experience little difficulty until the daily methadone dose reaches 30 mg or less. As the daily dose drops below 30 mg, opioid withdrawal symptoms often emerge between methadone doses. Additionally, the euphoria-blocking and anticraving effects of methadone are much diminished at this low dose level.

### **LAAM Discontinuation**

Cessation of OAT with LAAM follows a protocol similar to that for methadone cessation. Patients previously stabilized on LAAM may be candidates for buprenorphine once the LAAM dose is tapered to 40 mg or less per 48 hour dose. At this point, buprenorphine monotherapy can be instituted similarly to procedures for methadone discontinuation, although LAAM's pharmacology must be taken into account. (See [figure 4-5](#)



.) When

the patient has been stabilized on buprenorphine monotherapy, the physician should employ the same decision process described above for methadone discontinuation. If there is a compelling reason for OAT discontinuation, short-term discontinuation with buprenorphine monotherapy can be achieved with a 3-day protocol as described above. In the absence of a compelling reason, the patient should be switched to buprenorphine/naloxone combination treatment, which can be

reduced subsequently and eventually discontinued if the patient remains clinically stable without evidence of illicit opioid use. Physicians should remember that patients are most likely to relapse during or after discontinuation. Therefore, patients should be monitored closely for relapse to illicit opioid use, and the dose of buprenorphine should be increased in response to cravings or withdrawal symptoms.

## **Discontinuation of Buprenorphine/Naloxone**

When the decision is made to discontinue buprenorphine/naloxone combination treatment, the daily dose should be decreased gradually over a predetermined period or at a rate negotiated by the patient and the physician together. Withdrawal symptoms may emerge as the buprenorphine/naloxone dose is decreased. In this event, the taper may be temporarily suspended.

As with the protocols described above, discontinuation of buprenorphine/naloxone combination treatment may be performed over short periods (e.g., 3 days), but this approach should be used only in the presence of a compelling urgency to discontinue buprenorphine/naloxone in this manner; discontinuation over a longer period is the preferred manner.

## **Patient Management**

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### **Psychosocial Treatment Modalities and Adjuncts**

Pharmacotherapy alone is rarely sufficient treatment for drug addiction ([McLellan et al. 1993](#)). Treatment outcomes demonstrate a dose-response effect based on the level or amount of psychosocial treatment services that are provided. Therefore, physicians have an additional level of responsibility to patients with opioid addiction problems; this responsibility goes beyond prescribing and/or administering buprenorphine. For most patients, drug abuse counseling—individual or group—and participation in self-help programs (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous [AA]; Narcotics Anonymous [NA]; Methadone Anonymous, a 12-Step group that supports recovery concurrent with OAT; Self Management and Recovery Training [SMART] Recovery; or Moderation Management) are considered necessary. Self-help groups may be beneficial for some patients

and should be considered as one adjunctive form of psychosocial treatment. It should be kept in mind, however, that the acceptance of patients who are maintained on medication for opioid treatment is often challenged by many 12-Step groups. Furthermore, many patients have better treatment outcomes with formal therapy in either individual or group settings.

The ability to provide counseling and education within the context of office-based practice may vary considerably, depending on the type and structure of the practice. Psychiatrists, for example, may include components of cognitive-behavioral therapy or motivational enhancement therapy during psychotherapy sessions. Some medical clinics may offer patient education, which generally is provided by allied health professionals (e.g., nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants). A drug abuse treatment program typically includes counseling and prevention education as an integral part of the clinic program. In a stand-alone general or family practice, the opportunities for education/counseling may be more limited. As part of their training in opioid addiction treatment, physicians should obtain, at a minimum, some knowledge of the basic principles of brief intervention in case of relapse. (See [appendix E](#).) Physicians may want to consider providing to office staff some training in brief treatment interventions and motivational interviewing; this information could also enhance the effectiveness of treatment for other medical problems. A list of trainers may be found at <http://www.motivationalinterview.org>.

Many physicians already have the capability to assess and link substance abuse patients to ancillary services for substance abuse. Physicians considering making buprenorphine available to their patients should ensure that they are capable of providing psychosocial services, either in their own practices or through referrals to reputable behavioral health practitioners in their communities. In fact, the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 ([DATA 2000](#)) stipulates that, when physicians submit notification to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to obtain the required waiver to practice opioid addiction therapy outside the OTP setting, they must attest to their capacity to refer such patients for appropriate counseling and other nonpharmacological therapies.

It is incumbent on practitioners of buprenorphine treatment to be aware of the options and services that are available in their communities and to be able to make appropriate referrals.

Physicians should be able to determine the intensity of services needed by individual patients and when those needs exceed what the practitioner can offer. Contingency plans should be established for patients who do not follow through with referrals to psychosocial treatments. Physicians should work with qualified behavioral health practitioners to determine the intensity of services needed beyond the medical services.

## Treatment Monitoring

### **Treatment Plan**

Patients and their physicians together need to reach agreement on the goals of treatment through a treatment plan that is based on assessment of the patient. Treatment plans should include both treatment goals and the conditions under which treatment is to be discontinued. The initial plan should contain contingencies for treatment failure, such as referral to a more structured treatment modality (e.g., an OTP). For polysubstance users, it is also important for patients to set a goal of abstinence from all illicit drugs, provided that counseling to address other drug use is also available. (Abstinence from all illegal or inappropriate substances of abuse should be the goal of all patients, whether single or polysubstance users.) Treatment contracts are often employed to make explicit what is expected of patients in terms of their cooperation and involvement in addiction treatment. Physicians may find the sample contract (or an adapted version) in [appendix H](#) a useful tool in working with patients in an office-based setting.

After obtaining signed patient consent (according to 42 C.F.R. Part 2), physicians should clarify assessment and treatment goals with family members. Whenever possible, significant others should be engaged in the treatment process, as their involvement is likely to have a positive effect on outcomes. Conversely, when patients refuse to involve their significant others, or when the latter refuse to become involved, positive outcomes are less likely.

### **Frequency of Visits**

During the stabilization phase, patients receiving maintenance treatment should be seen on at least a weekly basis. Part of the purpose of the ongoing assessment is to determine whether



patients are adhering to the dosing regimen and handling their medications responsibly (e.g., storing it safely, taking it as prescribed, not losing it). Once a stable buprenorphine dose is reached and toxicological samples are free of illicit opioids, the physician may determine that less frequent visits (biweekly or longer, up to 30 days) are acceptable. Visits on a monthly basis are considered a reasonable frequency for patients on stable buprenorphine doses who are making appropriate progress toward treatment objectives and in whom toxicology shows no evidence of illicit drugs. However, physicians should be sensitive to treatment barriers, such as geographical issues, travel distance to treatment, domestic issues such as child care and work obligations, as well as the cost of care.

Patients' progress in achieving treatment goals should be reviewed periodically. Various goal-attainment scales, which can be administered by a nurse or case manager, can assist in monitoring and documenting patients' progress. Measures used to evaluate maintenance treatment with buprenorphine are similar to those used for other areas of addiction treatment:

- No illicit opioid drug use occurs and no other ongoing drug use (including problematic alcohol use) is found that might compromise patient safety (e.g., ongoing abuse of alcohol and/or benzodiazepines).
- Toxicity is absent.
- Medical adverse effects are absent.
- Behavioral adverse effects are absent.
- Patient is handling the medication responsibly.
- Patient is adhering to all elements of the treatment plan (e.g., seeing a psychotherapist or attending groups as scheduled, participating in recovery-oriented activities).

## **Unstable Patients**

Given these evaluations, physicians need to decide when they cannot appropriately provide further management for particular patients. For example, if a patient is abusing other drugs that a physician does not feel competent to manage, or if toxicology tests are still not free of illicit

drugs after 8 weeks, then the physician may want to assess (1) whether to continue to treat that patient without additional evidence of ongoing counseling or (2) whether to refer the patient to specialists or to a more intensive treatment environment. Decisions should be based on the treatment plan to which the patient previously agreed.

## **Toxicology Testing for Drugs of Abuse**

During opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine, toxicology tests for all relevant illicit drugs should be administered at least monthly. Urine screening is the most common testing method, although testing can be performed on a number of other bodily fluids and tissues—including blood, saliva, sweat, and hair. A comprehensive discussion of urine drug testing in the primary care setting can be found in *Urine Drug Testing in Primary Care: Dispelling the Myths & Designing Strategies* (Gourlay et al. 2002).

Methadone and heroin metabolites are each detected by commercially available urine-testing kits. Buprenorphine does not cross-react with the detection procedures for methadone or other opioids; therefore, it will not be detected in a routine urine drug screen. Both physicians and patients should be aware of this fact.

Buprenorphine and its metabolites are excreted in urine. Urine testing for buprenorphine can be performed at a medical laboratory, but at the time of this document's publication, there are no CLIA-waived, in-office buprenorphine urine test kits commercially available.

There are two primary reasons to consider testing for buprenorphine: (1) in new patients to confirm that they do not already have buprenorphine in their system, (2) to assist with evaluating adherence in patients on buprenorphine treatment. (Refer to chapter 3 for additional information on drug-testing methodologies.) As new testing procedures and protocols are recommended for use in addiction treatment with buprenorphine, SAMHSA will be making additional information available through the Division of Pharmacologic Therapies (DPT) Web site at <http://www.dpt.samhsa.gov/>.

## **Discontinuation of Medication**

Under ideal conditions, discontinuation of medication should occur when a patient has achieved the maximum benefit from treatment and no longer requires continued treatment to maintain a drug-free lifestyle. Once this goal is achieved, buprenorphine should be tapered slowly and appropriately while psychosocial services continue to be provided. Patients should be assessed for continued stability in maintaining their drug-free lifestyle. Patients should then be followed with psychosocial services and/or the reintroduction of medication, if needed, for continued progress.

Certain situations undoubtedly will arise, however, in which a physician may feel that a patient is not progressing satisfactorily. For example, a patient may not be in compliance with the treatment plan or with office procedures (e.g., timely payment). Under some conditions, physicians may consider involuntary termination of treatment, but must be careful to not abandon patients. Physicians can and should take a variety of actions to prevent this situation. Physicians should have written policies in place regarding patient behavior, office procedures, and adherence to treatment. These policies should be discussed with patients before initiating buprenorphine treatment, and patients should agree to comply with these policies.

Physicians should develop practices for dealing with minor infractions of rules or policies and with minor nonadherence to treatment plans. Clearly defined points should be identified at which patients will be notified that they are not adhering to treatment plans, and they should be given the opportunity to improve in this regard. In the event of involuntary termination of treatment, it is necessary for physicians to make appropriate referrals—to OTPs, to other physicians who are willing to prescribe buprenorphine, or to other appropriate treatment facilities. If a patient will not be receiving OAT in another treatment setting, the physician must manage the appropriate withdrawal of buprenorphine so as to minimize withdrawal discomfort. A patient may or may not be willing to accept referrals made on his or her behalf, but physicians must make good faith efforts to ensure that their patients have an appropriate level of care available after their own therapeutic involvement is ended.

For more information about treatment management issues, see the forthcoming TIP *Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction* (CSAT in development). The treatment

management principles addressed in that TIP will also be applicable to office-based buprenorphine treatment.

### Footnotes

Due to a number of factors, including the association of LAAM with cardiac arrhythmias in some patients, as of January 1, 2004, the sole manufacturer has ceased production of the drug.

## TIP 40: 5 Special Populations

### Overview

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The presence of certain life circumstances or comorbid medical or psychosocial conditions warrant special attention during the evaluation and treatment of opioid addiction with buprenorphine. Patients with circumstances or conditions that require special attention include those with certain medical comorbidities (e.g., AIDS, tuberculosis), concurrent mental disorders, or concurrent alcohol or other substance abuse disorders, as well as pregnant women, adolescents, geriatric patients, patients under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system, and healthcare professionals who are addicted. Because of the unique issues presented by these circumstances, addiction treatment for these patients may require additional training or specialty care and consultation. Before treating individuals with these circumstances for opioid addiction in an office setting, physicians should consider whether patient needs can be met with the resources at hand or if referral to specialized treatment programs or to addiction specialists is indicated.

### Patients With Medical Comorbidities

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Patients addicted to opioids who present for treatment often have other comorbid medical problems. These conditions are often a consequence of high-risk behaviors, including injection drug use (intravenous, intramuscular, or subcutaneous), or of the direct toxic effects of the

active and inert ingredients in illicit drugs. The prevalence of infectious diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C, tuberculosis, skin and soft tissue infections, syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases [STDs]) is increased in these patients and should be screened for, as outlined in chapter 3. Other comorbid conditions (e.g., seizure disorders, valvular heart disease secondary to endocarditis, pulmonary hypertension secondary to talc granulomatosis, lymphedema, pseudoaneurysms of the neck and groin secondary to thrombophlebitis, and renal insufficiency secondary to heroin-associated nephropathy) also are seen in this population and may require special attention. Patients with a history of endocarditis need antibiotic prophylaxis before certain dental procedures. Patients with a history of hepatitis C may require hepatitis A and B vaccinations and may be intolerant of potentially hepatotoxic medications. One retrospective study found that liver function tests were significantly elevated in patients treated with buprenorphine who also had a history of hepatitis, suggesting that liver function tests should be monitored in these patients on a regular basis during buprenorphine treatment ([Petry et al. 2000](#)). A detailed discussion of medical comorbidities in addiction is beyond the scope of this chapter and is reviewed extensively elsewhere ([Cherubin and Sapira 1993](#); [Stein 1990](#)).

Treatment of opioid addiction in patients with comorbid medical conditions is likely to result in better outcomes for the comorbid conditions than would be achieved in the absence of treatment of the substance use disorder. [Moatti et al. \(2000\)](#) found that patients on buprenorphine tended to be more compliant with highly active antiretroviral therapies (HAART) than patients who were not treated concurrently for opioid addiction.

Pharmacological treatments of comorbid medical disorders may have important drug interactions with buprenorphine due to shared pharmacokinetic properties. Although [Carrieri et al. \(2000\)](#) found no detrimental short-term effect of buprenorphine treatment on the effect of HAART on viral load, buprenorphine is metabolized by the hepatic cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme system and will likely interact with other medications metabolized by the same system. Certain antiretrovirals may occupy the cytochrome P450 3A4 system and thus inhibit the metabolism of buprenorphine. Other drugs that induce the cytochrome P450 3A4 system (e.g., certain antituberculosis, anticonvulsant, and antiretroviral medications) may decrease serum

concentrations of buprenorphine, resulting in opioid withdrawal or decreased effectiveness. Because the interactions of most medications with buprenorphine have not been systematically studied, physicians should monitor for any signs or symptoms of opioid side effects, loss of effectiveness, or withdrawal after a patient starts any new medications. Buprenorphine dose adjustments may be necessary after starting new medications, even for patients who have been on a stable maintenance dose.

Other potential, and as yet unknown, drug interactions include the possibility of buprenorphine increasing or decreasing metabolism of medications used in treating comorbid medical conditions. Informing patients of potential drug–drug interactions, especially sedation or precipitated opioid withdrawal, is important to prevent jeopardizing adherence with medical treatment and/or precipitating relapse to illicit opioid use.

In summary, it is important to screen for and manage common comorbid medical conditions in patients being treated with buprenorphine for opioid addiction and to anticipate known and potential drug interactions. For additional information on drug–drug interactions with buprenorphine, refer to chapter 2.

## Pregnant Women and Neonates

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The continued use of heroin during pregnancy, with its attendant risks of infection, overdose, and intrauterine withdrawal, is life threatening to both the woman and the fetus. Research on the safety and efficacy of buprenorphine in pregnant women and neonates is scarce, however. If a patient is pregnant or is likely to become pregnant during the course of opioid addiction treatment, the physician must consider whether buprenorphine is an appropriate option for treatment. Physicians should weigh all the risks and benefits of treatment with buprenorphine against all the risks associated with the continued use of illicit opioids. Methadone is currently the standard of care in the United States for the treatment of opioid addiction in pregnant women. Methadone has been shown to be safe and effective for both pregnant women and neonates.

The FDA classifies buprenorphine as a Pregnancy Category C drug. The FDA Pregnancy Labeling Task Force, whose long-term goal is to determine how animal toxicologic information contributes to clinically meaningful information in pregnancy, assigns a human prescription drug to Pregnancy Category C (1) if animal reproduction studies have shown an adverse effect on the fetus, (2) if there are no adequate and well-controlled studies in humans, and (3) if the benefits from the use of the drug in pregnant women may be acceptable despite its potential risks. In addition to considering the FDA warnings pertaining to the use of buprenorphine in pregnant women, physicians also must consider the risks of infectious diseases and lifestyle issues (e.g., poor nutrition, lack of prenatal care) when addressing the needs of these patients.

## Effects of Buprenorphine in Pregnancy

Data on the pharmacokinetics of buprenorphine in pregnant women and neonates are extremely limited ([Johnson et al. 2003a](#); [Marquet et al. 1997](#)). Likewise, data are limited regarding the clinical use of buprenorphine for the maintenance treatment of opioid addiction in pregnant women. The literature in this area generally consists of case reports and a small number of prospective studies; there have been no controlled clinical trials. In case reports from European and Australian sources on the use of buprenorphine in opioid-addicted pregnant women, doses have ranged from 0.4 to 24 mg per day. In these limited reports, pregnancies have generally progressed normally, with low rates of prematurity or other problems. Maternal clinical laboratory data in these reports generally have been within normal limits; or were deemed either clinically nonsignificant at levels expected during pregnancy, when outside normal limits, or were due to factors other than the medication. For a complete review of the published literature on the use of buprenorphine in the treatment of opioid addiction in pregnant women, see ([Johnson et al. 2003a](#)).

## Infants of Mothers Treated With Buprenorphine

Buprenorphine and its metabolite norbuprenorphine have been found in high concentrations in the blood, urine, and meconium of the neonates of women maintained on buprenorphine ([Johnson et al. 2003a](#); [Marquet et al. 1997](#)).

The published literature includes information on at least 309 infants born to women maintained on buprenorphine treatment. Although not systematically studied, a neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) has been reported in 191 of these 309 infants, with approximately one-half of those with NAS requiring treatment. In more than 40 percent of the cases, however, evaluation of the abstinence syndrome was confounded by other drug use by the mothers. Overall, although no randomized controlled trials have been reported, the NAS associated with buprenorphine has been reported to be less intense than that observed with methadone.

One prospective open-label study ([Fischer et al. 2000](#)) found signs of NAS in 7 of 15 neonates exposed to buprenorphine in utero. Of these 15 neonates, 3 had moderate signs of NAS that required treatment, 4 had mild signs of NAS that required no treatment, and 8 had no signs of NAS. A second prospective open-label study ([Johnson et al. 2003a](#)) reported NAS in 3 of 3 neonates; however, none required treatment with medications.

NAS from buprenorphine generally appears within the first 2 days of life, peaks within 3 or 4 days, and lasts for 5 to 7 days. Few infants were reported to have had a withdrawal syndrome for 6 to 10 weeks.

Similar to the treatment of NAS following exposure to methadone, several different medications (including chlorpromazine, phenobarbital, benzodiazepine, paregoric elixir, and morphine drops) have been used successfully to treat the NAS associated with buprenorphine. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends tincture of opium as the medication of choice for treatment of neonatal opioid withdrawal symptoms ([American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Drugs 1998](#)).

## Breast Feeding While on Buprenorphine Treatment

The limited human pharmacokinetic data show that buprenorphine passes into the breast milk of lactating women at a plasma-to-milk ratio of approximately 1. As a result, and because of the poor oral bioavailability of buprenorphine, the nursing infant will be exposed to only 1/5–1/10 of the total amount of buprenorphine available.



The literature includes reports on approximately 40 to 50 women who were maintained on buprenorphine and who breastfed after delivery ([Johnson et al. 2003a](#); [Lejeune et al. 2001](#); [Loustauneau et al. 2002](#); [Marquet et al. 1997](#)). These reports indicate that buprenorphine present in breast milk does not appear to suppress NAS. Additionally, NAS has not been observed after the cessation of breastfeeding by women who were maintained on buprenorphine ([Loustauneau et al. 2002](#)).

Although the Subutex® and Suboxone® package inserts state that breastfeeding is not advised in mothers treated with these medications, it is the consensus of the panel that any effects of these medications on the breastfed infant would be minimal and that breastfeeding is not contraindicated. However, given the limited literature in this subject area, physicians are advised to use their professional judgment in their recommendations.

## The Buprenorphine/Naloxone Combination in Pregnancy

The panel notes that there is a question whether the buprenorphine/naloxone combination is or is not recommended for use in pregnancy. Naloxone is labeled by FDA as a Pregnancy Category B drug. The FDA Pregnancy Labeling Task Force assigns a human prescription drug to Pregnancy Category B (1) if animal reproduction studies have failed to demonstrate a risk to the fetus and (2) if there are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Despite the fact that naloxone is classified as a Pregnancy Category B drug, it should be used with caution in pregnant women who are addicted to opioids. Because both mother and fetus will be dependent on the opioids used by the mother, administration of naloxone could precipitate withdrawal in both.

If it is determined that buprenorphine is the only acceptable option for the treatment of a pregnant woman, and she understands the issues and risks, then she should be treated with buprenorphine monotherapy so as not to risk fetal exposure to naloxone. It should be noted that use of buprenorphine monotherapy, because of its greater potential for abuse, necessitates more frequent monitoring of patients and of their medication supplies. To prevent abuse and diversion of the buprenorphine monotherapy formulation, quantities of take-home supplies and quantities

provided via prescription should be smaller compared to treatment with the buprenorphine/naloxone combination formulation.

## Summary

Buprenorphine is classified by FDA as a Pregnancy Category C drug. Data from controlled studies on the use of buprenorphine in pregnant women are needed. The available evidence does not show any causal adverse effects on pregnancy or neonatal outcomes from buprenorphine treatment, but this evidence is from case series not from controlled studies. Methadone is currently the standard of care in the United States for the treatment of heroin addiction in pregnant women. Pregnant women presenting for treatment of opioid addiction should be referred to specialized services in methadone maintenance treatment programs. If such specialized services are refused by a patient or are unavailable in the community, maintenance treatment with the buprenorphine monotherapy formulation may be considered as an alternative. In such circumstances, it should be clearly documented in the medical record that the patient has refused methadone maintenance treatment, or that such services were unavailable; that she was informed of the risks of using buprenorphine, a medication that has not been thoroughly studied in pregnancy; and that she understands those risks.

## Adolescents/Young Adults

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The use of buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid addiction in adolescents has not been systematically studied. It is known, however, that patients younger than 18 years of age, with relatively short addiction histories, are at particularly high risk for serious complications of addiction (e.g., overdose deaths, suicide, HIV, other infectious diseases). Many experts in the field of opioid addiction treatment believe that buprenorphine should be the treatment of choice for adolescent patients with short addiction histories. Additionally, buprenorphine may be an appropriate treatment option for adolescent patients who have histories of opioid abuse and addiction and multiple relapses but who are not currently dependent on opioids. Buprenorphine may be preferred to methadone for the treatment of opioid addiction in adolescents because of the relative ease of withdrawal from buprenorphine treatment. Because adolescents often

present with short histories of drug use, detoxification with buprenorphine, followed by drug-free or naltrexone treatment, should be attempted first before proceeding to opioid maintenance. Naltrexone may be a valuable therapeutic adjunct after detoxification. Naltrexone has no abuse potential and may help to prevent relapse by blocking the effects of opioids if the patient relapses to opioid use. Naltrexone has been a valuable therapeutic adjunct in some opioid-abusing populations, particularly youth and other opioid users early in the course of addiction. Naltrexone is most likely to be effective for patients with strong support systems that include one or more individuals willing to observe, supervise, or administer the naltrexone on a daily basis. In those adolescent patients in whom detoxification is followed by relapse, buprenorphine maintenance may then be the appropriate alternative. Refer to chapter 4 for buprenorphine maintenance and detoxification procedures.

The treatment of patients younger than 18 years of age can be complicated due to psychosocial considerations, the involvement of family members, and State laws concerning consent and reporting requirements for minors. Ancillary counseling and social services are important to support cooperation and follow through with the treatment regimen.

## Parental Consent

Parental consent is a critical issue for physicians who treat adolescents addicted to opioids. In general, adult patients with “decisional capacity” have the unquestioned right to decide which treatments they will accept or refuse, even if refusal might result in death. The situation for adolescents is somewhat different, however. Adolescents do not have the legal status of adults unless they are legally “emancipated minors.” Adolescents’ rights to consent to or to refuse medical treatment differ from those of adults. Rules differ from State to State regarding whether an adolescent may obtain substance use disorder treatment without parental consent. Some State statutes governing consent and parental notification specify consideration of a number of fact-based variables, including the adolescent’s age and stage of cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as issues concerning payment for treatment and rules for emancipated minors.

More than one-half of the States permit individuals younger than 18 years of age to consent to substance use disorder treatment without parental consent. In States that do require parental consent, providers may admit adolescents to treatment when parental consent is obtained. In States requiring parental notification, treatment may be provided to an adolescent when the adolescent is willing to have the program communicate with a parent. Histories of neglect or abuse may be revealed during the care of adolescent patients, and physicians must be aware of reporting requirements in their State. Mandatory child abuse reporting takes precedence over Federal addiction treatment confidentiality regulations, according to Title 42, Part 2 of the Code of Federal Relations (42 C.F.R. Part 2).

Additional difficulties may arise when adolescents requesting treatment refuse to permit notification of a parent or guardian. With one very limited exception, the Federal confidentiality regulations prohibit physicians (or their designees) from communicating substance abuse treatment information to any third parties, including parents, without patient consent. The sole exception allows a "program director" (i.e., treating physician) to communicate "facts relevant to reducing a threat to the life or physical well-being of the applicant or any other individual to the minor's parent, guardian, or other person authorized under State law to act in the minor's behalf," when the program director believes that the adolescent, because of extreme youth or mental or physical condition, lacks the capacity to decide rationally whether to consent to the notification of his or her parent or guardian (42 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart B, Section 2.14d 2001). The program director must believe the disclosure to a parent or guardian is necessary to cope with a substantial threat to the life or physical well-being of the adolescent applicant or someone else. In some cases, communication with State child protection agencies or judicial authorities may be an acceptable alternative, or the required course of action, if the physician believes neglect or abuse has already occurred.

## Treatment Setting

The more intensive a proposed treatment is, the more risk a program assumes in admitting adolescents without parental consent. Outpatient programs may have a better justification for

admitting adolescents without parental consent than do intensive outpatient or residential programs.

## Summary

Buprenorphine can be a useful option for the treatment of adolescents who have opioid addiction problems. The treatment of addiction in adolescents is complicated by a number of medical, legal, and ethical considerations, however. Physicians intending to treat addiction in adolescents should be thoroughly familiar with the laws in their State regarding parental consent. Physicians who do not specialize in the treatment of opioid addiction or adolescent medicine should strongly consider consulting with, or referring adolescent addiction patients to, such specialists. Additionally, State child protection agencies can be a valuable resource when determining the proper disposition for adolescent patients.

## Geriatric Patients

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Literature on the use of buprenorphine in geriatric patients is extremely limited. Because of potential differences in rates of metabolism and absorption compared to the nonelderly, care should be exercised in the use of buprenorphine in elderly individuals. Particular care should be exercised during buprenorphine induction both because of differences in body composition and because of the possibility of medication interactions.

## Patients With Significant Psychiatric Comorbidity

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The association of psychopathology and opioid addiction is well established. Psychiatric symptoms and disorders may be drug-induced, independent, or interrelated. Substance use and addiction can mimic, exacerbate, or precipitate psychiatric symptoms and disorders. Most substances of abuse produce moderate-to-severe psychiatric symptoms, and there is a complex association between substance use and psychiatric status.

A study of rates of psychiatric disorders among 716 patients addicted to opioids seeking treatment with methadone ([Brooner et al. 1997](#)), found a lifetime rate of 47 percent, and a

current rate of 39 percent. Of note, patients in this study were stabilized in treatment for 1 month before the psychiatric evaluation. Other, earlier studies have reported higher rates of depression, antisocial personality characteristics, schizophrenia or schizotypal features, manic symptomatology, and alcoholism in opioid-addicted patients. For example, in a study of 533 opioid-addicted patients in treatment for their drug problems, Rounsaville and colleagues (1982) found that 86.9 percent met diagnostic criteria for some psychiatric disorder (including personality disorders) in their lifetimes, and 70.3 percent met criteria for a current psychiatric disorder. It should be noted, however, that, although the rates of major depressive disorder, alcoholism, antisocial personality, minor mood disorders, and anxiety disorders in this group exceeded those found in the general population, the rates of schizophrenia and mania did not.

Although the etiological significance of psychiatric disorders in the genesis of opioid addiction is not established, it is known that treatment for both conditions is necessary for substance abuse treatment to be effective. Therefore, the presence and severity of comorbid psychiatric conditions must be assessed in patients who are opioid addicted before, or while, initiating buprenorphine treatment, and a determination must be made whether referral to specialized behavioral health services is indicated.

Untreated or inadequately treated psychiatric disorders can interfere with the effective treatment of addiction. Polysubstance use and psychiatric problems are both associated with negative treatment outcomes unless they are identified and treated appropriately. For example, patients with major depression or dysthymia are more likely to use illicit drugs during treatment than patients who do not suffer from depression. Assessment is critical to determine whether psychiatric symptoms represent primary psychiatric disorders or substance-induced conditions. Primary psychiatric disorders may improve but do not dissipate with abstinence or maintenance therapies, and these disorders may require additional treatment. The psychiatric disorders most commonly encountered in patients who are opioid addicted are other substance abuse disorders, depressive disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, substance-induced psychiatric disorders, and antisocial and borderline personality disorders.

The presence of comorbid psychiatric disorders should not exclude patients from admission to opioid addiction treatment. Diagnosis of psychiatric disorders is critical to matching patients to appropriate treatment services. In first encounters with patients, it is essential to evaluate for the presence of suicidal or homicidal ideations, signs or symptoms of acute psychosis, and other acute or chronic psychiatric problems that may render patients unstable. Initiation of antidepressant therapy, in conjunction with treatment for opioid addiction, may be considered in patients presenting with signs or symptoms of depression. If manic behavior is present, attempts should be made to determine whether it is substance induced or whether the etiology is a primary mood disorder.

When psychiatric symptoms are severe or unstable, hospitalization for protection and containment may be appropriate to ensure the safety of the patient and others. Patients who are considered actively suicidal should not receive buprenorphine on an outpatient, prescription basis. Rather, they should be referred immediately for appropriate treatment, which may include psychiatric hospitalization. Those who are not currently suicidal but who have a history of suicidal ideation or attempts should be monitored closely in terms of medication supply and followup.

Psychiatrically stable patients can be readily accepted into treatment and stabilized on buprenorphine; subsequently they may receive additional psychiatric assessment to identify conditions requiring treatment. Patients who present with depression during the maintenance phase of buprenorphine treatment require continued assessment and should be treated appropriately.

## Polysubstance Abuse

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The abuse of multiple drugs (polysubstance abuse) among individuals addicted to opioids is common. Although polysubstance abuse or dependence may be identified during assessment, physicians should remain alert to their presence throughout the course of addiction treatment.

Pharmacotherapy with buprenorphine for opioid addiction will not necessarily have a beneficial effect on an individual's use of other drugs. It is essential that patients be referred for treatment of addiction to other types of drugs when indicated. In addition, care must be exercised in the prescribing of buprenorphine for patients who abuse alcohol and for those who abuse sedative/hypnotic drugs (especially benzodiazapines) because of the documented potential for fatal interactions. (See chapter 2 for further information.)

## Patients With Pain

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### Patients Being Treated for Pain Who Become Dependent on Opioids

Patients who need treatment for pain *but not for addiction* should be treated within the context of their regular medical or surgical setting. They should not be transferred to an opioid maintenance treatment program simply because they are being prescribed opioids and have become physically dependent on the opioids in the course of their medical treatment.

It can be difficult to distinguish between the legitimate desire to use opioids for pain relief and the desire to procure them for purposes of obtaining a high. This may be especially true in patients who have become physically dependent on opioids in the course of the treatment of a pain condition when that pain has been undertreated and inadequately relieved. Figure 5-1 presents some distinguishing features in the use of opioids by patients who are not addicted and who are using opioids for pain relief versus their use by patients who are addicted.

#### **Clinical Features Distinguishing Opioid Use in Patients With Pain Versus Patients Who Are Addicted to Opioids**

<b>Clinical Features</b>	<b>Patients With Pain</b>	<b>Patients Who Are Addicted to Opioids</b>
Compulsive drug use	Rare	Common
Crave drug (when not in pain)	Rare	Common



<b>Clinical Features</b>	<b>Patients With Pain</b>	<b>Patients Who Are Addicted to Opioids</b>
Obtain or purchase drugs from nonmedical sources	Rare	Common
Procure drugs through illegal activities	Absent	Common
Escalate opioid dose without medical instruction	Rare	Common
Supplement with other opioid drugs	Unusual	Frequent
Demand specific opioid agent	Rare	Common
Can stop use when effective alternate treatments are available	Usually	Usually not
Prefer specific routes of administration	No	Yes
Can regulate use according to supply	Yes	No

## Patients Who Are Addicted to Opioids and Who Require Treatment for Pain

Behaviors associated with drug abuse frequently result in the development of acute and chronic pain conditions. These conditions may be caused by the toxic effects of the drug itself, as well as by trauma and infection. Patients receiving addiction treatment also may experience pain due to

illness or injury unrelated to drug use. Physicians must manage this pain efficiently and appropriately. Opioids are among the most effective available options for managing pain, but they are often not prescribed to patients receiving treatment for addiction out of fear of “feeding the addiction” or of triggering relapse in currently abstinent patients. State laws governing the prescription of opioids to known substance abusers may place prescribing physicians at risk for prosecution unless the medical record clearly distinguishes between treatment of the addiction and treatment of the pain condition.

***Treatment Approach.*** Little clinical experience is documented regarding the treatment of pain in patients receiving buprenorphine. Pain in patients receiving buprenorphine treatment initially should be treated with nonopioid analgesics when appropriate. Although buprenorphine itself has powerful analgesic properties, the once-daily administration of buprenorphine, as used for the treatment of opioid addiction, often does not provide sufficiently sustained relief of pain. Additionally, the onset of action of analgesia with buprenorphine may not be adequate for the treatment of acute pain. In a study of the use of buprenorphine for acute analgesia ([Nikoda et al. 1998](#)), the high analgesic activity of buprenorphine was comparable to that of morphine, but the onset of action was found to be inadequate for urgent care.

Patients maintained on buprenorphine whose acute pain is not relieved by nonopioid medications should receive the usual aggressive pain management, which may include the use of short-acting opioid pain relievers. While patients are taking opioid pain medications, the administration of buprenorphine generally should be discontinued. Note that, until buprenorphine clears the body, it may be difficult to achieve analgesia with short-acting opioids in patients who have been maintained on buprenorphine, and higher doses of short-acting opioids may be required. Noncombination opioid analgesics are generally preferred to avoid the risk of acetaminophen or salicylate toxicity when combination products are used at the doses that are likely to be required for pain control in patients who have been maintained on buprenorphine. Analgesic dose requirements should be expected to decrease as buprenorphine clears the body.

When restarting buprenorphine administration, physicians should refer to chapter 4 for induction procedures. To prevent the precipitation of withdrawal, buprenorphine should not be restarted

until an appropriate period after the last dose of the opioid analgesic, depending on the half-life of the opioid analgesic used.

Patients who are receiving opioids for chronic severe pain may not be good candidates for buprenorphine treatment because of the ceiling effect on buprenorphine's analgesic properties. This rationale also would be applicable to terminally ill patients. In patients who are maintained on buprenorphine and require end-of-life opioid analgesia, buprenorphine administration should be discontinued, unless the buprenorphine provides adequate analgesia or the patient prefers buprenorphine for some other reason.

In patients who are opioid addicted and who have severe chronic pain, methadone several times per day or other "round the clock" (rather than as required) long-acting, full-agonist medications may be the best alternative for treatment. This form of treatment is often best undertaken in conjunction with an Opioid Treatment Program (OTP). However, if the physician is (1) otherwise qualified to treat the condition causing the pain and (2) careful to document that the primary purpose of the opioid pharmacotherapy is the management of that pain condition, then it may be acceptable to treat that patient in the office setting without further referral. As long as this type of patient remains compliant and is not abusing the pain medication or other drugs, there is no legal need for the patient to be treated in an OTP or with buprenorphine for the preexisting or concurrent addictive disorder. However, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) frowns on the use of this as a rationale to treat the "pain of withdrawal" or spurious and ill-defined pain conditions to justify unsanctioned opioid maintenance. Patients who are on chronic opioids for pain management and who have a history of drug abuse or addiction can be referred to a 12-Step program or other self-help group to help them maintain their level of recovery. Random drug screening also can reassure the physician that both physician and patient are staying within lawful bounds.

Because all pharmacological treatment with opioids is highly regulated, physicians who desire to use opioids to treat chronic pain in patients who are at risk for opioid addiction or relapse are advised to consult with a colleague knowledgeable in opioid maintenance pharmacology.

## Patients Recently Discharged From Controlled Environments

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This section focuses on the assessment and treatment of patients with opioid addiction who are recently released from controlled environments (e.g., prison) and who would be presumed to have involuntarily detoxified from opioids while incarcerated. Other situations that may warrant special consideration include (1) patients discharged from extended hospital or rehabilitation center stays, (2) patients returning from extended overseas travel/expatriate duty in countries without easy access to licit or illicit opioids, and (3) other conceivable situations that may have caused an involuntary break in active use of and addiction to opioids.

The findings on patient assessment will help to clarify the diagnosis of opioid dependence/addiction and whether a patient is at serious risk for resumption of an addiction lifestyle if not treated with a buprenorphine maintenance regimen. Other considerations for providers include possible psychosocial needs and issues, as well as collateral contacts that may be required when treating patients who may have continuing involvement with the criminal justice system.

## Opioid Addiction in Patients Under the Jurisdictions of Criminal Justice Systems

It is well documented that the crimes committed by most of the more than 1 million individuals incarcerated in the United States are related to the abuse of or addiction to drugs. Opioids are the preferred contraband drugs of choice in prisons and can be relatively easy to obtain in some institutions. Prison environments and inmate culture reinforce the addiction cycle and addiction lifestyle. Recidivism rates are higher in patients with a history of opioid addiction because they are typically reincarcerated after failing parole or drug-testing requirements.

## Assessment of Patients Who Are Opioid Addicted and Who Are Recently Released From Controlled Environments

Physicians should consider the following factors when assessing for addiction in patients recently released from controlled environments: length of incarceration; postrelease addiction patterns and cycles; addiction treatment history (drug-free, outpatient, recovery, or therapeutic community); self-help involvement (before, during, and since incarceration); and reported triggers of illegal drug use and addiction upon release. Physicians should evaluate for the presence of comorbid mental health issues or history of other drug or alcohol use that could complicate buprenorphine treatment. (See chapter 3 for further information.) If office-based buprenorphine treatment is being considered, physicians should carefully assess the patient's level of commitment to treatment and the likelihood of self control.

## Assessing Psychosocial Issues

Attention to psychosocial issues is important in patients who are coming out of controlled environments. Issues that often affect the success of addiction treatment include

- Number and/or length of incarcerations
- Types of crimes committed (e.g., violent offenses, drug-related)
- Gang affiliations
- Type and length of parole or probation (e.g., whether the patient will be given regular or random drug testing)
- The patient's collateral contacts and reporting requirements
- Prior and current involvement of the patient's social support system (e.g., the presence of opioid addiction problems or current use in family members)
- Recent changes in familial or marital relationships
- Whether permission from the criminal justice system is required for treatment with buprenorphine

Physicians should ask the patient whether he or she has a reasonable plan for a stable lifestyle (e.g., involvement in job, school, family) and whether the plan includes total abstinence from

drug and alcohol use. If there is no plan, the physician should ask why not and offer to help the patient create one.

Final determination of a patient's appropriateness for buprenorphine treatment will involve analysis of the subjective assessment and disclosed information, as well as a review of medical records to determine treatment compliance and cooperation. Physicians should assess a patient's psychosocial needs and the compatibility of the patient with the potential limitations of an outpatient, office-based environment.

## Determining Appropriateness for Buprenorphine Treatment

A number of issues should be considered in determining the most appropriate treatment modality for patients with addiction who are recently released from controlled environments. If a methadone clinic alternative is available, the physician should determine the factors that may preclude referral. The existing doctor/patient relationship should be assessed, as well as eligibility for other assistance, and the presence of a solid support system. A physician's limitations with regard to potentially intensive buprenorphine monitoring activities should be considered, as a treating physician may be called on to determine, verify, and explain a treatment regimen (e.g., to parole and probation officers); to document the patient's compliance; and to interact with the legal system, employers, and others. Physicians should consider potential issues associated with detoxification in jail if a patient is reincarcerated. The cost of treatment needs to be considered, as well as whether the costs are covered by a patient's health insurance. Additionally, potential risk issues need to be considered (e.g., diversion, overdose, criminal activity while in a limited, professional care setting, mixing with other patients).

## Healthcare Professionals Who Are Addicted to Opioids

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A substantial problem of addiction to prescription opioids exists among physicians and other health professionals, especially within certain specialties (e.g., anesthesiology) ([Talbot et al. 1987](#)). Prescription opioid addiction in health professionals should be viewed as an occupational

hazard of the practice of medicine. Health professionals who have substance abuse disorders often require specialized, extended care.

If the addictive drug of choice is present in the workplace, reentry planning after initial treatment should consider relapse by the health professional who is in early recovery. The opioid antagonist naltrexone and other adjunctive medications are often required. Naltrexone has been a routine adjunct for the treatment of anesthesiologists who are addicted to opioids. The key to successful naltrexone use by a highly motivated patient is a strong social support system that includes a significant other, coworker, or health professional who directly observes the naltrexone use on a regular basis.

Buprenorphine may be an appropriate treatment option for some health professionals who are opioid dependent, but the use of a partial agonist would need to be part of a comprehensive, monitored recovery plan. If the professional has already come under regulatory scrutiny, such a plan might require approval by the State authority to which the professional reports.

## **TIP 40: 6 Policies and Procedures**

### Overview

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This chapter discusses policies and procedures relating to the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 ([DATA 2000](#)), to preparations for providing opioid addiction treatment in practices that are new to this form of care, to State and Federal laws and regulations that protect the privacy and confidentiality of addiction treatment information, and to the use of buprenorphine in federally regulated Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs). Physicians should become thoroughly familiar with these issues before engaging in the practice of opioid addiction treatment ([Brooks 1997](#)). In addition, readers are referred to [appendix F](#), which contains additional information about many of these topics.

## The DATA 2000 Waiver

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DATA 2000 enables *qualifying physicians* to receive a *waiver* from the special registration requirements in the Narcotic Addict Treatment Act (NATA) of 1974 (and its enabling regulations, including Title 42, Part 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations, that govern OTPs) for the provision of opioid addiction treatment. This waiver allows qualifying physicians (see "Physician Waiver Qualifications") to *prescribe or dispense* Schedule III, IV, and V "narcotic" medications for the treatment of opioid addiction in the office and other clinical settings if (and only if) those medications have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in addiction treatment. As of this writing, Subutex® (buprenorphine) and Suboxone® (buprenorphine/naloxone) sublingual tablets are the only Schedule III, IV, or V pharmaceuticals to have received such FDA approval. NATA makes it illegal for narcotics to be used "off label" to treat opioid addiction. This prohibition extends even to other forms of buprenorphine (e.g., Buprenex®) that have not been specifically approved for the treatment of opioid addiction.

### Notification of Intent

To receive a DATA 2000 waiver to practice opioid addiction treatment with approved Schedule III, IV, and V opioid medications, a physician must notify the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of his or her intent to begin dispensing or prescribing this treatment. This Notification of Intent must be submitted to SAMHSA before the initial dispensing or prescribing of opioid treatment. Notification of Intent forms can be obtained on the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Web site at <http://www.buprenorphine.samhsa.gov>. Forms can be submitted to SAMHSA online or printed out and then submitted via ground mail or fax.

The Notification of Intent must contain information on the physician's qualifying credentials (as defined below) and additional certifications, including that the physician has the capacity to refer addiction patients for appropriate counseling and other nonpharmacological therapies, and that the physician will not have more than 30 patients on such addiction treatment at any one time. (Note that the 30-patient limit applies both to physicians in solo practice and to entire group



practices, and the limit is not affected by the number of locations of practice of the physicians or groups.)

Physicians who meet the qualifications defined in DATA 2000 are issued a waiver by SAMHSA and a special identification number by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). DEA has issued regulations that require physicians to include this identification number on all records when dispensing and on all prescriptions when prescribing approved opioid medications (currently only Subutex® and Suboxone®) for opioid addiction.

## Immediate-Type Notifications

Under DATA 2000, a physician may initiate opioid addiction treatment for “an individual patient” after submitting a Notification of Intent to SAMHSA but *before receipt of a waiver and identification number*. To provide this “immediate-type” treatment, a physician must not only submit the usual Notification of Intent to SAMHSA but also must include notification of intent to begin immediately treating an individual patient. SAMHSA’s Notification of Intent form includes a checkbox for indicating this immediate-type intent.

## Physician Waiver Qualifications

To qualify for a waiver under DATA 2000, a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) must meet any one or more of the following criteria:

- The physician holds a subspecialty board certification in addiction psychiatry from the American Board of Medical Specialties.
- The physician holds an addiction certification from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM).
- The physician holds a subspecialty board certification in addiction medicine from the American Osteopathic Association (AOA).
- The physician has, with respect to the treatment and management of patients who are opioid addicted, completed not less than 8 hours of training (through classroom situations, seminars at professional society

meetings, electronic communications, or otherwise) that is provided by ASAM, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, the American Medical Association, AOA, the American Psychiatric Association, or any other organization that the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) determines is appropriate for purposes of this subclause.

- The physician has participated as an investigator in one or more clinical trials leading to the approval of a narcotic drug in Schedule III, IV, or V for maintenance or detoxification treatment, as demonstrated by a statement submitted to the DHHS Secretary by the sponsor of such approved drug.
- The physician has such other training or experience as the State medical licensing board (of the State in which the physician will provide maintenance or detoxification treatment) considers to demonstrate the ability of the physician to treat and manage patients who are opioid addicted.
- The physician has such other training or experience as the DHHS Secretary considers as demonstrating the ability of the physician to treat and manage opioid-dependent patients. Any criteria of the DHHS Secretary under this subclause shall be established by regulation.

## For More Information

Proper training on the use of buprenorphine will be key to the successful introduction of this new treatment paradigm, regardless of the clinical setting of buprenorphine treatment. Thus, SAMHSA and the consensus panel strongly encourage all physicians who plan to practice opioid addiction treatment with buprenorphine to participate in a DATA 2000-qualifying 8-hour training program on buprenorphine. SAMHSA maintains a list of upcoming DATA 2000-qualifying buprenorphine training sessions on the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Web site at <http://www.buprenorphine.samhsa.gov>. These sessions include Web-based courses accessible from the physician's own computer. Detailed information about the DATA 2000 paradigm and the

physician waiver process also can be found on the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Web site.

Additionally, information can be obtained by contacting the SAMHSA Buprenorphine Information Center by phone at 866-BUP-CSAT (866-287-2728) or by e-mail at [info@buprenorphine.samhsa.gov](mailto:info@buprenorphine.samhsa.gov).

## Preparing for Office-Based Opioid Treatment

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Prior to embarking on the provision of office-based addiction treatment services, medical practices that will be new to this type of care should undertake certain preparations to ensure the highest quality experience for patients, providers, and staff. Providers and practice staff should have an appropriate level of training, experience, and comfort with this new form of treatment. Linkages with other medical and mental health professionals should be established to ensure the availability of comprehensive community-based treatment services.

### Physician Training, Experience, and Comfort Level

Physicians who intend to treat opioid addiction should seek to establish a level of comfort and expertise with this form of care. A physician's comfort level in providing treatment for addiction will vary according to the physician and his or her practice situation. For example, a physician might choose to refer a patient with addiction and depression, depending on the severity of depression, whether a psychologist or psychiatrist is available in the area, and whether the patient can afford specialized mental health care, among other factors.

Expertise in treating opioid addiction includes knowledge of applicable practice standards or guidelines, familiarity with the evidence supporting the recommended treatments, protocols for primary treatment or referral of patients with certain complicating conditions (e.g., severe depression), and knowledge of any applicable regulations or laws. Physicians must become knowledgeable about the most up-to-date treatments for opioid addiction, including pharmacotherapy, psychosocial interventions, self-help and mutual-help groups, and other appropriate treatments. Physicians who treat opioid-addicted patients with buprenorphine should participate in addiction medicine training and professional activities and should learn from other

professionals in addiction treatment. Basic and ongoing training in addiction treatment will greatly enhance a physician's effectiveness in treating opioid addiction.

Each patient presents with different and usually complex needs. Physicians who treat patients with opioid addiction in the office-based setting must consider and plan for the full range of their patients' needs before initiating treatment. Candidates for buprenorphine treatment of opioid addiction should be assessed for a broad array of biopsychosocial needs in addition to opioid use and addiction, and should be treated and/or referred for help in meeting those needs.

## Establishing Office Procedures

Before undertaking the provision of office-based buprenorphine treatment, physicians should make arrangements to provide comprehensive care and contingency plans for patients who may not be appropriate candidates for this treatment. In addition, physicians should arrange for other physicians with DATA 2000 waivers to be available to provide care to the treating physician's opioid addiction patients in the treating physician's absence (e.g., while on vacation).

Office policies and procedures for opioid addiction treatment should be established, written, and clearly communicated to staff members and patients. Staff members should be trained and educated about opioid addiction, addiction treatment, patient confidentiality (see "Confidentiality and Privacy" section below), medication treatments, nonpharmacological treatments, behavioral characteristics of addiction, and the medical approach to addiction treatment.

Common behaviors and defense mechanisms of addicted patients should be anticipated.

Medication must be stored in a secure location, and the possibility of diversion must be minimized. Office items (e.g., prescription pads, syringes, needles) and staff possessions should be secured to minimize theft.

## Establishing Treatment Linkages

Establishing linkages with other medical professionals is essential. Because patients addicted to opioids commonly have coexisting medical and psychiatric conditions, most physicians will need

to establish linkages with other medical and mental health specialists, particularly those specializing in the evaluation and treatment of common comorbid conditions (e.g., hepatitis B and C, HIV, tuberculosis, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, risk of suicide and homicide). Physical examinations and laboratory evaluations will need to be completed either onsite or offsite from the office of the physician who provides office-based buprenorphine treatment.

An up-to-date listing of community referral resources (e.g., therapy groups, support groups, residential therapeutic communities, sober-living options) should be given to patients. Referral resource lists are available from the substance abuse agencies of some local and State governments. To maximize followthrough with referrals, it is most helpful if the physician has firsthand knowledge of these groups and programs. When referrals are made, compliance will increase if staff call to make appointments in the presence of patients. When making referrals to support groups, it is helpful to have an individual in the group who is willing to accompany the patient to his or her first meeting. Referrals to social workers and case managers are often beneficial in helping patients address legal, employment, and family issues.

## Summary

Figure 6-1 summarizes the policies, procedures, and items that should be established or arranged for in a medical practice prior to initiating office-based opioid addiction treatment.

### **Figure 6-1. Policies, Procedures, and Items for Medical Practices To Establish Prior to Initiating Office-Based Opioid Addiction Treatment**

- Office policies and procedures for buprenorphine treatment
- Staff education and training
- Backup coverage for the practice
- Assurance of the privacy and confidentiality of addiction treatment information

- Linkages with qualified colleagues who will accept new referrals for buprenorphine treatment
- A referral network of medical specialists
- Timely physical examinations
- Linkages with medical treatment facilities, including opioid treatment programs
- A referral network of psychologists and psychiatrists with expertise in addictions, affective disorders, and chronic pain
- Linkages with addiction and psychiatric treatment programs
- Listing of community referral resources, including specific self-help groups who would welcome buprenorphine patients (e.g., Self Management and Recovery Training [SMART] Recovery, Moderation Management)
- Online/Internet listings of self-help groups (e.g., SMART Recovery, Moderation Management) that are accepting of individuals in recovery who are using medications as a part of that recovery

## Confidentiality and Privacy

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Prior to initiating office-based opioid addiction treatment, practice policies and procedures should be established that will guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of addiction treatment patients. Providers must comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding the privacy and confidentiality of medical records in general, and of information pertaining to addiction treatment services in particular.

The privacy and confidentiality of individually identifiable information relating to patients receiving drug or alcohol treatment is protected by SAMHSA confidentiality regulation Title 42, Part 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (42 C.F.R. Part 2). This regulation mandates that addiction treatment information in the possession of substance abuse treatment providers be handled with a greater degree of confidentiality than general medical information.

Occasionally, physicians will need to communicate with pharmacists and other healthcare providers about the addiction treatment of a particular patient (e.g., to verify a Suboxone® or Subutex® prescription). Regulation 42 C.F.R. Part 2 requires physicians providing opioid addiction treatment to obtain signed patient consent before disclosing individually identifiable addiction treatment information to any third party. A sample consent form with all the elements required by 42 C.F.R. Part 2 is included as appendix D. It is recommended that physicians have each new buprenorphine patient sign a copy of this form to prevent confidentiality problems at pharmacies when patients present with buprenorphine prescriptions. It is particularly important to obtain patient consent when telephoning or faxing prescriptions to pharmacies, as this information constitutes disclosure of the patient's addiction treatment. When physicians directly transmit prescriptions to pharmacies, further redisclosure of patient-identifying information by the pharmacy is prohibited, unless signed patient consent is obtained by the pharmacy. Regulation 42 C.F.R. Part 2 does not apply to pharmacies, however, when the patient delivers a buprenorphine prescription without telephone confirmation or other direct communication from a physician to the pharmacist.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, Public Law 104-191 (see <http://aspe.hhs.gov/admsimp/pl104191.htm>), which amends the Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986, mandates standardization of exchange formats for patient health, administrative, and financial data; requires development of unique identifiers for individuals, employers, health plans, and healthcare providers; and establishes security standards for protecting the confidentiality and integrity of individually identifiable health information. SAMHSA has prepared a document titled *Comparison Between the Confidentiality of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Patient Records (42 C.F.R. Part 2) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act 1996*. This document and a number of other HIPAA technical assistance tools are available on the SAMHSA HIPAA Web pages at <http://www.hipaa.samhsa.gov/>. See also the SAMHSA Treatment Assistance Publication (TAP) 13 *Confidentiality of Patient Records for Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment (Lopez 1994)*, available on the SAMHSA Treatment Improvement Exchange Web site at <http://www.treatment.org/taps/index.html>. Additionally, the Subutex® and Suboxone® package labels (available on the FDA Web site at

[http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/subutex\\_suboxone/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/subutex_suboxone/default.htm)) also contain information on Federal confidentiality rules and regulations. Physicians should also consult with their State medical authorities concerning privacy and confidentiality rules in their locales. Figure 6-2 lists some of the privacy and confidentiality issues that can arise in the course of addiction treatment.

### **Figure 6-2. Privacy and Confidentiality Issues in Addiction Treatment**

- Information covered by the doctor/patient privilege
- Circumstances in which confidential information is protected from disclosure
- Exceptions to State laws protecting medical information
- Duty to report
- Communications with third parties (e.g., families, employers, allied health care providers, third party payers, law-enforcement officers, responses to subpoenas)

## **Buprenorphine Use in OTPs**

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On May 22, 2003, SAMHSA announced an interim final rule permitting OTPs serving individuals addicted to opioids to offer buprenorphine treatment along with methadone and levo-alpha-acetyl-methadol (LAAM). The rule enables OTPs that are certified by SAMHSA to provide Subutex® and Suboxone® for opioid maintenance or detoxification treatment.

The provision of opioid addiction treatment with Subutex® and Suboxone® in SAMHSA-certified OTPs does not require a DATA 2000 waiver. Additionally, such treatment is not subject to the 30-patient limit that applies to individual physicians and group practices providing opioid addiction treatment outside the OTP system under the authority of a DATA 2000 waiver. The provision of opioid addiction treatment with Subutex® or Suboxone® in treatment settings other than OTPs, even by physicians who are licensed to work in OTPs, does require a DATA 2000 waiver and is subject to the 30-patient limit for individual physicians and group practices.



OTPs providing Subutex® and Suboxone® for opioid maintenance or detoxification treatment must conform to the Federal opioid treatment standards set forth under 42 C.F.R. § 8.12. These regulations require that OTPs provide medical, counseling, drug abuse testing, and other services to patients admitted to treatment. To offer Subutex® and Suboxone®, OTPs need to modify their registration with the DEA to add Schedule III narcotics to their registration certificates. OTPs can initiate this streamlined process by fax or letter. The letter should include the OTP's DEA registration number and request that the registration be amended to list Schedule III narcotic drugs. The letter must be signed by the program sponsor (program director) or medical director. Further information about this process can be found on the DEA Drug Registration Web site at [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drugreg/change\\_requests/sched\\_change.htm](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drugreg/change_requests/sched_change.htm).

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# TIP 40: Appendix B Assessment and Screening Instruments

Several of the following drug and alcohol assessment and screening instruments are available online at: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/publications.htm>.

## General

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- Addiction Severity Index (ASI) ([McLellan et al. 1980](#))  
(<http://www.tresearch.org> and  
<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/asi.htm>)
- Substance Use Disorders Diagnostic Schedule (SUDDS-IV) ([Hoffmann and Harrison 2002](#)) ([http://www.evinceassessment.com/product\\_sudds.html](http://www.evinceassessment.com/product_sudds.html))

## Readiness to Change

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See [appendix G](#).

## Screening Instruments

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### Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10), Drug Use Questionnaire

The following questions concern information about your possible involvement with drugs not including alcoholic beverages during the past 12 months. Carefully read each statement and decide if your answer is "Yes" or "No." Then circle the appropriate response beside the question.

In the following statements "drug abuse" refers to

- The use of prescribed or over-the-counter drugs in excess of the directions, and
- Any nonmedical use of drugs.
- The various classes of drugs may include cannabis (e.g., marijuana, hashish), solvents (e.g., paint thinner), tranquilizers (e.g., Valium),

barbiturates, cocaine, stimulants (e.g., speed), hallucinogens (e.g., lysergic acid diethylamide [LSD]), or narcotics (e.g., heroin). Remember that the questions do not include alcoholic beverages.

Please answer every question. If you have difficulty with a question, then choose the response that is mostly right.

**These Questions Refer to the Past 12 Months**

1.	Have you used drugs other than those required for medical reasons?	Yes	No
2.	Do you abuse more than one drug at a time?	Yes	No
3.	Are you always able to stop using drugs when you want to?	Yes	No
4.	Have you ever had blackouts or flashbacks as a result of drug use?	Yes	No
5.	Do you ever feel bad or guilty about your drug use?	Yes	No
6.	Does your spouse (or parents) ever complain about your involvement with drugs?	Yes	No
7.	Have you neglected your family because of your use of drugs?	Yes	No
8.	Have you engaged in illegal activities in order to obtain drugs?	Yes	No
9.	Have you ever experienced withdrawal symptoms (felt sick) when you stopped taking drugs?	Yes	No
10.	Have you had medical problems as a result of your drug use	Yes	No

(e.g., memory loss, hepatitis, convulsions, bleeding)?

Interpretation (Each "Yes" response = 1)

Score	Degree of Problems Related to Drug Abuse	Suggested Action
0	No Problems Reported	None At This Time
1-2	Low Level	Monitor, Reassess At A Later Date
3-5	Moderate Level	Further Investigation
6-8	Substantial Level	Intensive Assessment

*Source:* Adapted from *Addictive Behaviors*, 7(4), Skinner, H.A. The drug abuse screening test, 363-371, copyright 1982, with permission from Elsevier. Available online at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/Diagnosis-Treatment/DAST10.html>.

## Skinner Trauma History

Since your 18th birthday, have you

Had any fractures or dislocations to your bones or joints?

Been injured in a road traffic accident?

Injured your head?

Been injured in an assault or fight (excluding injuries during sports)?

Been injured after drinking?

A score of two or more positive responses to the five questions has been shown to indicate a high probability of excessive drinking or alcohol abuse.

*Source:* Skinner et al. 1984, reprinted with permission from American College of Physicians–American Society of Internal Medicine (ACP–ASIM).

## CAGE Questionnaire

Have you ever felt you ought to **C**ut down on your drinking?

Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking?

Have you ever felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking?

Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover (**E**ye-opener)?

One or more “yes” responses constitute a positive screening test. Note, however, that due to language barriers, individual interpretation of the questions, or other confounding factors, individuals answering “no” to all CAGE questions may still be at risk due to elevated drinking levels.

*Source:* Maisto and Saitz 2003.

## CAGE-AID: The CAGE Questions Adapted To Include Drugs

Have you felt you ought to **C**ut down on your drinking or drug use?

Have people **A**nnoyed you by criticizing your drinking or drug use?

Have you felt bad or **G**uilty about your drinking or drug use?

Have you ever had a drink or used drugs first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover (**E**ye-opener)?

One or more "yes" responses constitute a positive screening test. Note, however, that due to language barriers, individual interpretation of the questions, or other confounding factors, individuals answering "no" to all CAGE-AID questions may still be at risk due to elevated drinking or drug use levels.

*Source:* Brown and Rounds 1995.

## The TWEAK Questionnaire

**Tolerance:** (a) How many drinks can you hold, or (b) How many drinks does it take before you begin to feel the first effects of the alcohol?

**Worried:** Have close friends or relatives worried or complained about your drinking in the past year?

**Eye openers:** Do you sometimes take a drink in the morning when you first get up?

**Amnesia:** Has a friend or family member ever told you about things you said or did while you were drinking that you could not remember?

**Kut down:** Do you sometimes feel the need to cut down on your drinking?

The TWEAK questionnaire was originally developed to screen for risk drinking during pregnancy ([Russell et al. 1991](#)). It can also be used to screen for harmful drinking in the general population ([Chan et al. 1993](#)).

*Scoring:* A 7-point scale is used to score the test. The Tolerance question scores 2 points if (a) the patient reports he or she can hold more than five drinks without falling asleep or passing out, or (b) if it is reported that three or more drinks are needed to feel high. A positive response to the Worry question scores 2 points. A positive response to the last three questions scores 1 point each.



A total score of 3 or 4 usually indicates harmful drinking. In an obstetric patient, a total score of 2 or more indicates the likelihood of harmful drinking.

*Source:* The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Addiction Web site at <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/tweak.htm>

## The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT): Interview Version

1. How often do you have a drink<sup>2</sup> containing alcohol?  
 Never (0) [Skip to Questions 9–10]  
 Monthly or less (1)  
 2 to 4 times a month (2)  
 2 to 3 times a week (3)  
 4 or more times a week (4)
2. How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?  
 1 or 2 (0)  
 3 or 4 (1)  
 5 or 6 (2)  
 7, 8, or 9 (3)  
 10 or more (4)
3. How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?  
 Never (0)  
 Less than monthly (1)  
 Monthly (2)  
 Weekly (3)  
 Daily or almost daily (4)  
[Skip to Questions 9 and 10 if Total Score for Questions 2 and 3 = 0]
4. How often during the last year have you found that you were unable to stop drinking once you had started?

- Never (0)
- Less than monthly (1)
- Monthly (2)
- Weekly (3)
- Daily or almost daily (4)

5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of drinking?

- Never (0)
- Less than monthly (1)
- Monthly (2)
- Weekly (3)
- Daily or almost daily (4)

6. How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?

- Never (0)
- Less than monthly (1)
- Monthly (2)
- Weekly (3)
- Daily or almost daily (4)

7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?

- Never (0)
- Less than monthly (1)
- Monthly (2)
- Weekly (3)
- Daily or almost daily (4)

8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?

- Never (0)

- Less than monthly (1)
- Monthly (2)
- Weekly (3)
- Daily or almost daily (4)

9. Have you or someone else been injured as the result of your drinking?

- No (0)
- Yes, but not in the last year (1)
- Yes, during the last year (2)

10. Has a relative, friend, or a doctor or other health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?

- No (0)
- Yes, but not in the last year (1)
- Yes, in the last year (2)

Record the total of the specific items. [ ]

*Source:* Babor et al. 2001. Available at

[http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO MSD MSB 01.6a.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO_MSD_MSB_01.6a.pdf)

A self-report version of the AUDIT is also available in Babor et al. 2001.

## **Scoring and Interpretation of the AUDIT**

The minimum score (for nondrinkers) is 0 and the maximum possible score is 40. A score of 8 is indicative of hazardous and harmful alcohol use, and possibly of alcohol dependence. Scores of 8–15 indicate a medium level and scores of 16 and above a high level of alcohol problems.

Babor et al. (2001) recommend a cutoff score of 7 for women and individuals over 65 years of age; Bradley et al. (1998) recommended an even lower cutoff score of 4 points for women. For patients who are resistant, uncooperative, or noncommunicative, a clinical screening procedure (described by Babor et al. 2001 may be necessary.

## Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (MAST)

	0. Do you enjoy a drink now and then?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	1. *Do you feel you are a normal drinker? (By normal we mean you drink less than or as much as most other people)	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	2. Have you ever awakened the morning after some drinking the night before and found that you could not remember a part of the evening?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(1)	3. Does your wife, husband, a parent, or other near relative ever worry or complain about your drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	4. *Can you stop drinking without a struggle after one or two drinks?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(1)	5. Do you ever feel guilty about your drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	6. *Do friends or relatives think you are a normal drinker?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	7. *Are you able to stop drinking when you want to?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(5)	8. Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(1)	9. Have you gotten into physical fights when drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	10. Has your drinking ever created problems between you and your wife, husband, a parent, or other relative?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	11. Has your wife, husband (or other family member) ever	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

	gone to anyone for help about your drinking?		
(2)	12. Have you ever lost friends because of your drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	13. Have you ever gotten into trouble at work or school because of drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	14. Have you ever lost a job because of drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	15. Have you ever neglected your obligations, your family, or your work for two or more days in a row because you were drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(1)	16. Do you drink before noon fairly often?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	17. Have you ever been told you have liver trouble? Cirrhosis?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	18. **After heavy drinking have you ever had delirium tremens (DTs) or severe shaking or heard voices or seen things that really weren't there?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(5)	19. Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(5)	20. Have you ever been in a hospital because of drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	21. Have you ever been a patient in a psychiatric hospital or on a psychiatric ward of a general hospital where drinking was part of the problem that resulted in hospitalization?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2)	22. Have you ever been seen at a psychiatric or mental health clinic or gone to any doctor, social worker, or clergyman for	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

help with any emotional problem where drinking was part of the problem?		
(2) 23. ***Have you ever been arrested for drunk driving, driving while intoxicated, or driving under the influence of alcoholic beverages? If YES, how many times? _____	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(2) 24. Have you ever been arrested, or taken into custody, even for a few hours, because of other drunk behavior? If YES, how many times? _____	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

\*Alcoholic response is negative \*\*5 points for each DT \*\*\*2 points for each arrest

### MAST Scoring System

In general, five points or more would place the subject in alcoholic category. Four points would be suggestive of alcoholism, and three points or fewer would indicate the subject is not alcoholic (Selzer 1971).

Source: American Journal of Psychiatry, 127, 1653–1658 (1971). Copyright (1971). The American Psychiatric Association, <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org>. Reprinted by permission. See <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/mast.htm>.

### Self-Administered Short Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (SMAST)

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Administration: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you feel you are a normal drinker? (By normal we mean you	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
---	------------	-----------

drink less than or as much as most other people.)		
2. Does your wife, husband, a parent, or other near relative ever worry or complain about your drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
3. Do you ever feel guilty about your drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
4. Do friends or relatives think you are a normal drinker?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
5. Are you able to stop drinking when you want to?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
6. Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
7. Has drinking ever created problems between you and your wife, husband, a parent, or other near relative?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
8. Have you ever gotten into trouble at work or school because of drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
9. Have you ever neglected your obligations, your family, or your work for two or more days in a row because you were drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
10. Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
11. Have you ever been in a hospital because of drinking?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
12. Have you ever been arrested for drunken driving, driving while intoxicated, or driving under the influence of alcoholic beverages?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
13. Have you ever been arrested, even for a few hours, because of other drunken behavior?	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

Source: Adapted from Selzer et al. 1975. Reprinted with permission from the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*.

## SMAST Scoring System

Each of the 13 items on the Short MAST is scored 1 (one) or 0 (zero), with questions 1, 4, and 5 scored 1 for each "no" answer, and the other items scored 1 for each "yes" answer. A score of 2 indicates possible alcoholism; a score of 3 or greater indicates probable alcoholism.

## Withdrawal Assessments

### Narcotic Withdrawal Scale

Fultz and Senay (1975); (Table 1 page 816) used a grading scheme for hospitalized patients undergoing opiate withdrawal to determine initial methadone therapy as follows:

Grade	Physical Findings	Initial Dose of Methadone
1	Lacrimation and/or rhinorrhea Diaphoresis Yawning Restlessness Insomnia	5 mg
2	Dilated pupils Piloerection Muscle twitching and/or myalgia Arthralgias Abdominal pain	10 mg
3	Tachycardia Hypertension Tachypnea Fever Anorexia or nausea Extreme restlessness	15 mg
4	Diarrhea and/or vomiting Dehydration Hyperglycemia Hypotension Curled-up position	20 mg

Source: Fultz and Senay 1975, reprinted with permission from American College of Physicians–American Society of Internal Medicine (ACP–ASIM).



## The Clinical Institute Narcotic Assessment (CINA) Scale for Withdrawal Symptoms

The Clinical Institute Narcotic Assessment (CINA) Scale measures 11 signs and symptoms commonly seen in patients during narcotic withdrawal. This can help to gauge the severity of the symptoms and to monitor changes in the clinical status over time.

PARAMETERS	FINDINGS	POINTS
Parameters based on Questions and Observation:		
(1) abdominal changes: Do you have any pains in your abdomen?	No abdominal complaints; normal bowel sounds Reports waves of crampy abdominal pain Crampy abdominal pain; diarrhea; active bowel sounds	0 1 2
(2) changes in temperature: Do you feel hot or cold?	None reported Reports feeling cold; hands cold and clammy to touch Uncontrolled shivering	0 1 2
(3) nausea and vomiting: Do you feel sick in your stomach? Have you vomited?	No nausea or vomiting Mild nausea; no retching or vomiting Intermittent nausea with dry heaves Constant nausea; frequent dry heaves and/or vomiting	0 2 4 6
(4) muscle aches: Do you have any muscle cramps?	No muscle aching reported; arm and neck muscles soft at rest Mild muscle pains Reports severe muscle pains; muscles in	0 1 3

PARAMETERS	FINDINGS	POINTS
	legs arms or neck in constant state of contraction	
Parameters based on Observation Alone:		
(5) goose flesh	None visible Occasional goose flesh but not elicited by touch; not permanent Prominent goose flesh in waves and elicited by touch Constant goose flesh over face and arms	0 1 2 3
(6) nasal congestion	No nasal congestion or sniffing Frequent sniffing Constant sniffing watery discharge	0 1 2
(7) restlessness	Normal activity Somewhat more than normal activity; moves legs up and down; shifts position occasionally Moderately fidgety and restless; shifting position frequently Gross movement most of the time or constantly thrashes about	0 1 2 3
(8) tremor	None Not visible but can be felt fingertip to fingertip Moderate with patient's arm extended Severe even if arms not extended	0 1 2 3
(9) lacrimation	None Eyes watering; tears at corners of	0 1 2

PARAMETERS	FINDINGS	POINTS
	eyes Profuse tearing from eyes over face	
(10) sweating	No sweat visible Barely perceptible sweating; palms moist Beads of sweat obvious on forehead Drenching sweats over face and chest	0 1 2 3
(11) yawning	None Frequent yawning Constant uncontrolled yawning	0 1 2
TOTAL SCORE	[Sum of points for all 11 parameters]	

Minimum score=0, Maximum score=31. The higher the score, the more severe the withdrawal syndrome. Percent of maximal withdrawal symptoms= $((\text{total score})/31) \times 100\%$ . Source: Adapted from Peachey, J.E., and Lei, H. Assessment of opioid dependence with naloxone. *British Journal of Addiction* 83(2):193–201, 1988. Reprinted with permission from Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

## Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS)

For each item, circle the number that best describes the patient's signs or symptoms. Rate just on the apparent relationship to opiate withdrawal. For example, if heart rate is increased because the patient was jogging just prior to assessment, the increased pulse rate would not add to the score.

Patient Name:	Date:	Time:
<b>Reason for this assessment:</b>		
<b>1. Resting pulse rate:</b> _____	<b>7. GI upset:</b> <i>over last half hour</i> 0	

*beats/minute Measured after the patient is sitting or lying for one minute.* 0 Pulse rate 80 or below 1 Pulse rate 81–100 2 Pulse rate 101–120 4 Pulse rate greater than 120

No GI symptoms 1 Stomach cramps 2 Nausea or loose stool 3 Vomiting or diarrhea 5 Multiple episodes of diarrhea or vomiting

**2. Sweating:***over past half hour not accounted for by room temperature of patient activity* 0 No reports of chills or flushing 1 Subjective reports of chills or flushing 2 Flushed or observable moisture on face 3 Beads of sweat on brow or face 4 Sweat streaming off face

**8. Tremor:***observation of outstretched hands* 0 No tremor 1 Tremor can be felt, but not observed 2 Slight tremor observable 4 Gross tremor or muscle twitching

**3. Restlessness:***observation during assessment* 0 Able to sit still 1 Reports difficulty sitting still, but is able to do so 3 Frequent shifting or extraneous movements of legs/arms 5 Unable to sit still for more than a few seconds

**9. Yawning:***observation during assessment* 0 No yawning 1 Yawning once or twice during assessment 2 Yawning three or more times during assessment 4 Yawning several times/minute

**4. Pupil size** 0 Pupils pinned or normal size for room light 1 Pupils possibly larger than normal for room light 2 Pupils moderately dilated 5 Pupils so dilated that only the rim of the iris is visible

**10. Anxiety or irritability** 0 None 1 Patient reports increasing irritability or anxiousness 2 Patient obviously irritable, anxious 4 Patient so irritable or anxious that participation in the assessment is difficult

**5. Bone or joint aches:***if patient was*

**11. Gooseflesh skin** 0 Skin is

*having pain previously, only the additional component attributed to opiate withdrawal is scored.* 0 Not present 1 Mild diffuse discomfort 2 Patient reports severe diffuse aching of joints/muscles 4 Patient is rubbing joints or muscles and is unable to sit still because of discomfort

smooth 3 Piloerection of skin can be felt or hairs standing up on arms 5 Prominent piloerection

**6. Runny nose or tearing:***not accounted for by cold symptoms or allergies* 0 Not present 1 Nasal stuffiness or unusually moist eyes 2 Nose running or tearing 4 Nose constantly running or tears streaming down cheeks

Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
[The total score is the sum of all 11 items.] Initials of person completing assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Score: 5-12=Mild; 13-24=Moderate; 25-36=Moderately severe; >36=Severe withdrawal

Source: Adapted from Wesson et al. 1999. Reprinted with permission.

## Subjective Opiate Withdrawal Scale (SOWS)

Instructions: Answer the following statements as accurately as you can. Circle the answer that best fits the way you feel now.

0=not at all

1=a little

2=moderately

3=quite a bit

4=extremely

		Not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1	I feel anxious.	0	1	2	3	4
2	I feel like yawning.	0	1	2	3	4
3	I'm perspiring.	0	1	2	3	4
4	My eyes are tearing.	0	1	2	3	4
5	My nose is running.	0	1	2	3	4
6	I have goose flesh.	0	1	2	3	4
7	I am shaking.	0	1	2	3	4
8	I have hot flashes.	0	1	2	3	4
9	I have cold flashes.	0	1	2	3	4
10	My bones and muscles ache.	0	1	2	3	4
11	I feel restless.	0	1	2	3	4
12	I feel nauseous.	0	1	2	3	4
13	I feel like vomiting.	0	1	2	3	4
14	My muscles twitch.	0	1	2	3	4

15	I have cramps in my stomach.	0	1	2	3	4
16	I feel like shooting up now.	0	1	2	3	4

The Subjective Opiate Withdrawal Scale (SOWS) consist of 16 symptoms rated in intensity by patients on a 5-point scale of intensity as follows: 0=not at all, 1=a little, 2=moderately, 3=quite a bit, 4=extremely. The total score is a sum of item ratings, and ranges from 0 to 64.*Source:* Reprinted from Handelsman et al. 1987, p. 296, by courtesy of Marcel Dekker, Inc.*Other Sources:* Gossop 1990; Bradley et al. 1987.

### Addiction Research Foundation Clinical Institute for Withdrawal Assessment (CIWA-Ar)

Patient:	Date:	Time: (24 hour clock, midnight = 00:00)
<p><b>NAUSEA AND VOMITING</b>—Ask “Do you feel sick to your stomach? Have you vomited?” <i>Observation.</i> 0 no nausea and no vomiting 1 mild nausea with no vomiting 2 3 4 intermittent nausea with dry heaves 5 6 7 constant nausea, frequent dry heaves and vomiting</p>		<p><b>TACTILE DISTURBANCES</b>—Ask “Have you any itching, pins and needles sensations, any burning, any numbness, or do you feel bugs crawling on or under your skin?” <i>Observation.</i> 0 none 1 very mild itching, pins and needles, burning or numbness 2 mild itching, pins and needles, burning or numbness 3 moderate itching, pins and needles, burning or numbness 4 moderately severe hallucinations 5 severe hallucinations 6 extremely severe hallucinations 7 continuous</p>

**TREMOR**—Arms extended and fingers spread apart. *Observation.* 0 no tremor 1 not visible, but can be felt fingertip to fingertip 2 3 4 moderate, with patient’s arms extended 5 6 7 severe, even with arms not extended

hallucinations

**AUDITORY DISTURBANCES**—Ask “Are you more aware of sounds around you? Are they harsh? Do they frighten you? Are you hearing anything that is disturbing to you? Are you hearing things you know are not there?”  
*Observation.* 0 not present 1 very mild harshness or ability to frighten 2 mild harshness or ability to frighten 3 moderate harshness or ability to frighten 4 moderately severe hallucinations 5 severe hallucinations 6 extremely severe hallucinations 7 continuous hallucinations

**PAROSYSMAL SWEATS**—  
*Observation.* 0 no sweat visible 1 barely perceptible sweating, palms moist 2 3 4 beads of sweat obvious on forehead 5 6 7 drenching sweats

**VISUAL DISTURBANCES**—Ask “Does the light appear to be too bright? Is its color different? Does it hurt your eyes? Are you seeing anything that is disturbing to you? Are you seeing things you know are not there?”  
*Observation.* 0 not present 1 very mild sensitivity 2 mild sensitivity 3 moderate sensitivity 4 moderately severe hallucinations 5 severe hallucinations 6 extremely severe hallucinations 7 continuous hallucinations



**ANXIETY**—Ask “Do you feel nervous?” *Observation.* 0 no anxiety, at ease 1 mildly anxious 2 3 4 moderately anxious, or guarded, so anxiety is inferred 5 6 7 equivalent to acute panic states as seen in severe delirium or acute schizophrenic reactions.

**HEADACHE, FULLNESS IN HEAD**—Ask “Does your head feel different? Does it feel like there is a band around your head?” Do not rate for dizziness or lightheadedness. Otherwise, rate severity. 0 not present 1 very mild 2 mild 3 moderate 4 moderately severe 5 severe 6 very severe 7 extremely severe

**AGITATION**—Observation. 0 normal activity 1 somewhat more than normal activity 2 3 4 moderately fidgety and restless 5 6 7 paces back and forth during most of the interview, or constantly thrashes about

**ORIENTATION AND CLOUDING OF SENSORIUM**—Ask “What day is this? Where are you? Who am I?” 0 oriented and can do serial additions 1 cannot do serial additions or is uncertain about date 2 disoriented for date by no more than 2 calendar days 3 disoriented for date by more than 2 calendar days 4 disoriented for place and/or person

Total CIWA-R-Score

Rater’s Initials

Maximum Possible Score 67

This scale is not copyrighted and can be reproduced freely. Source: Sullivan et al. 1989.

In determining the response categories it has been assumed that one drink contains 10 g alcohol. In countries where the alcohol content of a standard drink differs by more than 25 percent from 10 g, the response category should be modified accordingly.

## TIP 40: Appendix C DSM-IV-TR Material

### Criteria for Substance Dependence

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A **maladaptive pattern of substance use**, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, **as manifested by** three (or more) of the following, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period (**emphasis ours**):

1. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following:
  - a. A need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect
  - or**
  - b. Markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance
2. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:
  - a. The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance
  - or**
  - b. The same (or a closely related) substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms
3. The substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended
4. There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use

5. A great deal of time is spent on activities necessary to obtain the substance (e.g., visiting multiple doctors or driving long distances), use the substance (e.g., chain-smoking), or recover from its effects
6. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use
7. The substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance (e.g., current cocaine use despite recognition of cocaine-induced depression, or continued drinking despite recognition that an ulcer was made worse by alcohol consumption)

Specify if:

**With Physiological Dependence:** Evidence of tolerance or withdrawal (i.e., either Item 1 or 2 is present)

**Without Physiological Dependence:** No evidence of tolerance or withdrawal (i.e., neither Item 1 nor 2 is present)

## Substance Dependence Course Specifiers

Six course specifiers are available for Substance Dependence. The four Remission specifiers can be applied only after none of the criteria for Substance Dependence or Substance Abuse have been present for at least 1 month. The definition of these four types of Remission is based on the interval of time that has elapsed since the cessation of Dependence (Early versus Sustained Remission) and whether there is continued presence of one or more of the items included in the criteria sets for Dependence or Abuse (Partial versus Full Remission). Because the first 12 months following Dependence is a time of particularly high risk for relapse, this period is designated Early Remission. After 12 months of early Remission have passed without relapse to Dependence, the person enters into Sustained Remission. For both Early Remission and Sustained Remission, a further designation of Full is given if no criteria for Dependence or Abuse

have been met during the period of remission; a designation of Partial is given if at least one of the criteria for Dependence or Abuse has been met, intermittently or continuously, during the period of remission. The differentiation of Sustained Full Remission from recovered (no current Substance Abuse Disorder) requires consideration of the length of time since the last period of disturbance, the total duration of the disturbance, and the need for continued evaluation. If, after a period of remission or recovery, the individual again becomes dependent, the application of the Early Remission specifier requires that there again be at least 1 month in which no criteria for Dependence or Abuse are met. Two additional specifiers have been provided: On Agonist Therapy and In a Controlled Environment. For an individual to qualify for Early Remission after cessation of agonist therapy or release from a controlled environment, there must be a 1-month period in which none of the criteria for Dependence or Abuse are met.

The following Remission specifiers can be applied only after no criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met for at least 1 month. Note that these specifiers do not apply if the individual is on agonist therapy or in a controlled environment (see below).

**Early Full Remission:** This specifier is used if, for at least 1 month, but for less than 12 months, no criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met.

**Early Partial Remission:** This specifier is used if, for at least 1 month, but less than 12 months, one or more criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met (but the full criteria for Dependence have not been met).

**Sustained Full Remission:** This specifier is used if none of the criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met at any time during a period of 12 months or longer.

**Sustained Partial Remission:** This specifier is used if full criteria for Dependence have not been met for a period of 12 months or longer; however, one or more criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met.

**On Agonist Therapy:** This specifier is used if the individual is on a prescribed agonist medication, and no criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met for that class of medication

for at least the past month (except tolerance to, or withdrawal from, the agonist). This category also applies to those being treated for Dependence using a partial agonist or an agonist/antagonist.

**In a Controlled Environment:** This specifier is used if the individual is in an environment where access to alcohol and controlled substances is restricted, and no criteria for Dependence or Abuse have been met for at least the past month. Examples of these environments are closely supervised and substance-free jails, therapeutic communities, or locked hospital units.

## Criteria for Substance Abuse

---

A maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by one (or more) of the following, occurring within a 12-month period:

- Recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfil major role obligations at work, school, or home (e.g., repeated absences or poor work performance related to substance use; substance-related absences, suspensions, or expulsions from school; neglect of children or household)
- Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous (e.g., driving an automobile or operating a machine when impaired by substance use)
- Recurrent substance-related legal problems (e.g., arrests for substance-related disorderly conduct)
- Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance (e.g., arguments with spouse about consequence of intoxication, physical fights)

The symptoms have never met the criteria for Substance Dependence for this class of substance.

## Opioid Dependence

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Refer, in addition, to the text and criteria for Substance Dependence. Most individuals with Opioid Dependence have significant levels of tolerance and will experience withdrawal on abrupt discontinuation of opioid substances. Opioid Dependence includes signs and symptoms that reflect compulsive, prolonged self-administration of opioid substances that are used for no legitimate medical purpose or, if a general medical condition is present that requires opioid treatment, that are used in doses that are greatly in excess of the amount needed for pain relief. Persons with Opioid Dependence tend to develop such regular patterns of compulsive drug use that daily activities are typically planned around obtaining and administering opioids. Opioids are usually purchased on the illegal market but may also be obtained from physicians by faking or exaggerating general medical problems, or by receiving simultaneous prescriptions from several physicians. Health care professionals with Opioid Dependence will often obtain opioids by writing prescriptions for themselves or by diverting opioids that have been prescribed for patients or from pharmacy supplies.

## Other DSM-IV Substance-Related Disorders

### **ICD-9-CM**

1. 292.82 Persisting Dementia
2. 292.83 Persisting Amnestic Disorder
3. 292.11 Psychotic Disorder with Delusions
4. 292.12 Psychotic Disorder with Hallucinations
5. 292.84 Mood Disorder
6. 292.89 Anxiety Disorder
7. 292.89 Sleep Disorder
8. 292.89 Sexual Dysfunction
9. 292.89 Persisting Perception Disorder (Flashbacks)
10. 292.9 Disorder Not Otherwise Specified

### **Substance Related Disorders**

1. 305.01 Alcohol abuse, continuous
2. 305.02 Alcohol abuse, episodic
3. 305.03 Alcohol abuse, remission
4. 305.00 Alcohol abuse, unspec.
5. 303.00 Alcohol intoxication, acute, unspec.
6. 291.81 Alcohol withdrawal
7. 303.91 Alcoholism, chronic, continuous
8. 304.41 Amphetamine dependence, continuous
9. 304.11 Barbiturate dependence, continuous
10. 305.22 Cannabis abuse, episodic
11. 304.31 Cannabis dependence, continuous
12. 305.62 Cocaine abuse, episodic
13. 304.21 Cocaine dependence, continuous
14. 305.90 Drug abuse, unspec.
15. 305.92 Drug abuse, unspec., episodic
16. 304.90 Drug dependence, unspec.
17. 292.11 Drug-induced paranoia
18. 305.52 Opioid abuse, episodic
19. 304.01 Opioid dependence, continuous
20. 305.1 Tobacco abuse

*Source:* Reprinted with permission from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed., Text Revision. Copyright 2000. (American Psychiatric Association 2000).

# TIP 40: Appendix D Consent to Release of Information Under Title 42, Part 2, Code of Federal Regulations

The privacy and confidentiality of individually identifiable drug or alcohol treatment information is protected by SAMHSA confidentiality regulation Title 42, Part 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (42 C.F.R. Part 2). This regulation requires that physicians providing opioid addiction treatment obtain signed patient consent before disclosing individually identifiable addiction treatment information to any third party. On the next page is a sample consent form containing all the data elements required by 42 C.F.R. Part 2.

1. I (name of patient) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Authorize: Dr. \_\_\_\_\_
3. To disclose: (kind and amount of information to be disclosed)  
**Any information needed to confirm the validity of my prescription and for submission for payment for the prescription.**
4. To: (name or title of the individual or organization to which disclosure is to be made)  
**The dispensing pharmacy to which I present my prescription or to which my prescription is called/sent/faxed, as well as to third party payors.**
5. For (purpose of the disclosure)  
**Assuring the pharmacy of the validity of the prescription, so it can be legally dispensed, and for payment purposes.**
6. Date (on which this consent is signed)
7. Signature of patient
8. Signature of parent or guardian (where required)
9. Signature of individual authorized to sign in lieu of the patient (where required)



10. This consent is subject to revocation at any time except to the extent that the program which is to make the disclosure has already taken action in reliance on it. If not previously revoked, this consent will terminate on: (specific date, event, or condition)

**Termination of treatment.**

(c) Expired, deficient, or false consent. A disclosure may not be made on the basis of a consent which: (1) Has expired; (2) on its face substantially fails to conform to any of the requirements set forth in paragraph (a) of this section; (3) is known to have been revoked; or (4) is known, or through a reasonable effort could be known, by the individual holding the records to be materially false. (Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0930-0099.)

**Notice to accompany disclosure:**

Each disclosure made with the patient’s written consent must be accompanied by the following written statement: This information has been disclosed to you from records protected by Federal confidentiality rules (Title 42, Part 2, Code of Federal Regulations [42 C.F.R. Part 2]). The Federal rules prohibit you from making any further disclosure of this information unless further disclosure is expressly permitted by the written consent of the individual to whom it pertains or as otherwise permitted by 42 C.F.R. Part 2. A general authorization for the release of medical or other information is NOT sufficient for this purpose.

## **TIP 40: Appendix E Clinical Toolbox: Chapter 3 Supplemental Information**

### Motivational Interviewing and Motivational Enhancement Therapy

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A number of engagement and motivation strategies have been employed successfully in opioid addiction therapy. This section discusses briefly one such approach: motivational interviewing and motivational enhancement therapy (MET).

MET assumes that a patient is responsible for and capable of changing his or her behavior, and the MET therapist focuses on helping a patient mobilize his or her own inner resources. The basic motivational principles utilized in MET are expression of empathy, the development of discrepancy, avoiding argumentation, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy. Motivation for change is developed by eliciting self-motivational statements, listening with empathy, questioning, presenting personal feedback, affirming the patient, handling resistance, and reframing.

MET is a specific application of motivational interviewing that was developed for use in the treatment of alcohol abuse. In this brief, two- to four-session treatment approach, counselors first guide patients through an examination of the pros and cons of their drug use and of the difference between where they are and where they want to be, in an attempt to lead them to state their desire to change—the first step in recovery. Counselors then strengthen patients' commitment to change by helping them to identify their goals for recovery and to determine ways to reach these goals. Motivational interviewing can be used as a stand-alone counseling approach, but more often it is used as a first step in the recovery process and is followed by other interventions. It can also be incorporated into subsequent treatment sessions to bolster patients' motivation as needed.

Additional information about motivational interviewing and MET can be found on the Motivational Interviewing Page at <http://www.motivationalinterview.org> and in Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) TIP 35, *Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Use Disorder Treatment* (CSAT 1999b). (See <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm>.)

## FRAMES

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Brief interventions by physicians or allied health professionals can be effective measures in opioid addiction therapy. Effective brief interventions should include the following six elements: feedback, responsibility, advice, menu of strategies, empathy, and self-efficacy (Miller and Sanchez 1994). These elements are commonly referred to using the acronym FRAMES, and are further described in figure E-1. Additional information about brief interventions is found in CSAT TIP 34, *Brief Intervention and Brief Therapies for Substance Abuse* (CSAT 1999a). (See <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm>.)

## Details of Taking a Comprehensive Patient History in Opioid Addiction Assessment

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### History of Drug Use

What substances have been used over time? Begin with the first psychoactive substance used (licit or illicit, prescribed or nonprescribed), including nicotine and caffeine. Ask about the first use of all drugs: age at first use, drugs used, description of the experiences and the situations, amounts used, feelings, complications, and results. "How old were you when you first tried alcohol or any other drugs? Describe the experience to me."

Ask about all psychoactive substances: alcohol, amphetamines, caffeine, cannabis, cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, nicotine, opioids, phencyclidine (PCP), sedatives, hypnotics, anxiolytics, and others. What substances has the patient ever used? When were each of these first used? What were the effects? What has happened over time? Focus on opioid use, progression of problems, and recent symptoms in patients being considered for buprenorphine treatment.

### Effects of the Drugs Over Time

Explore the pattern of use of each substance. What has been the evolution and progression of use over time? Determine the frequency of use, amount of drugs used, route(s) used, progression of symptoms, and social context(s) of use. Has the patient attempted to cut down or control use; taken greater amounts of drugs or over a longer period than intended; spent much

time using, obtaining drugs, or recovering from use? Has the patient had blackouts, shakes, withdrawal symptoms, compulsivity of use, and/or craving? Has he or she injected drugs; reduced or abandoned important activities as a consequence of use; and/or continued to use despite problems or consequences? If so, give examples.

When did regular opioid use begin? Does the patient have to use to feel “normal”? Describe periods of heaviest use. Explore in detail the pattern of use during the weeks prior to evaluation, including the amount and time of last use. When did he or she last consume alcohol or ingest or inject drugs? What was used? How much? What were the effects of the last drugs used?

## Tolerance, Intoxication, and Withdrawal

For each drug ever used, explore tolerance, intoxication, and withdrawal syndromes. Especially focus on opioid-related syndromes.

**Tolerance** is the need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect, or markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance.

- Has tolerance developed to any drugs of abuse? How has tolerance manifested in this patient? Has any decrease in tolerance occurred? Quantify tolerance by the amount used and/or the cost of drugs needed to achieve effects.
- What is the most of each substance the patient can consume in a 24-hour period now? What is the most ever consumed in a 24-hour period?

## Intoxication and Overdose

- Explore symptoms of intoxication for each drug used.
- **Intoxication.** What was the patient’s age at first intoxication? What drug(s) were involved in that intoxication? How have intoxication episodes progressed over time? Describe recent intoxication episodes.

- For opioids, has the patient experienced drowsiness (“nodding out”), slurred speech, impaired memory or attention, respiratory depression, and/or coma?
- **Overdose.** Have there been any episodes of intentional or nonintentional overdose with any drug or drug combinations? What symptoms did the individual have? What treatments were received? How did the episodes resolve?

## Withdrawal

- **Withdrawal** is the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance. The same (or a closely related) substance may be taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms. (The signs and symptoms of opioid withdrawal are shown in figure 3-7.)
- Describe withdrawal symptoms or syndromes the patient has ever experienced. What is the pattern of withdrawal symptoms? What relieves the symptoms (e.g., more of the drug and/or a cross-tolerant drug)? Describe the characteristics of withdrawal episodes over time.
- What signs of opioid withdrawal occurred after discontinuation of use (e.g., dysphoria, nausea or vomiting, aching muscles, tearing, rhinorrhea, dilated pupils, piloerection, sweating, diarrhea, yawning, fever, and insomnia)?
- What treatments for withdrawal or its complications have been received in the past?
- **Withdrawal complications.** Is there any history of withdrawal complications (e.g., seizures—from withdrawal with sedative-hypnotics or intoxication with stimulants or opioids, delirium tremens, hallucinations)? What treatment was received for these past complications, and what was the treatment response?

## Relapse or Attempts at Abstinence

- Has the patient had a persistent desire or made unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use? How many times has the patient attempted to become abstinent? How was the patient able to achieve abstinence? Quantify the longest time completely abstinent from all psychoactive drugs. What was going on during the time of abstinence? To what does the patient attribute his or her abstinence?
- What is the patient's relapse history? What happened to end any abstinent periods? What triggered or preceded relapses? What drug(s) did the patient use when relapsing? What pattern of use developed after the relapses? How did the patient's use patterns change over time with each relapse? Are there any life circumstances that would give clues to events precipitating either relapse or abstinence?
- Has the patient ever been abstinent from all psychoactive drugs for an extended period of time? When and for how long? What has been the longest time free of opioids in the past year, the past 5 years, and lifetime? What has been the longest time free of all psychoactive substances in the past year, the past 5 years, and lifetime? Has the patient switched from one addicting substance to another over time?

## Treatment History—Addiction Treatment History

- What previous diagnoses—addiction, psychiatric, and medical—have been given to this patient?
- Describe all past attempts at detoxification. How many times has detoxification been tried? Was detoxification medically supervised? If so, how long were the detoxification treatments? What were the complications of detoxification? What were the outcomes? How long after detoxification did the patient start using opioids again? Why?
- If the patient has ever been treated for addiction:
  - How many times has he or she received treatment? How long was each treatment?

– What level(s) of care were received (detoxification, inpatient, residential, outpatient, sober-living environment, opioid maintenance therapy)? What treatments were received (group, individual, or family psychotherapy; relapse prevention; pharmacotherapy; education; cognitive-behavioral therapy; motivational enhancement therapy; others)? Was the focus of the treatment on psychiatric symptoms or addiction problems, or did the individual receive integrated addiction and psychiatric treatment services? How long was each treatment? Did the patient complete the recommended treatments? If not, why not?

– Has the patient received pharmacotherapy for addiction? What previous treatment was received (e.g., brief medical detoxification, opioid maintenance therapy, disulfiram, naltrexone, or other medication therapy)? Has previous treatment been medical therapy alone or medical therapy in combination with comprehensive treatment interventions?

– Was the patient compliant with previous drug and alcohol treatment, including prior opioid treatment programs? Did he or she use drugs and alcohol while in treatment? How long did she remain completely abstinent from all nonprescribed psychoactive drugs after each treatment? Which treatment was the most successful? Which one was least successful? What factors contributed to the success or failure of treatments?

- Has the patient had contact with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Cocaine Anonymous (CA), or other 12-Step recovery programs? Ask the patient to describe his or her involvement in those programs. How many meetings were attended? Did he or she ever get a sponsor and work the steps? Does he or she have a current sponsor? How frequent is meeting attendance now?
- Has the patient been involved in support groups other than 12-Step? If so, which ones? Ask the patient to describe the support groups and the level of his or her activities and involvement.

## Psychiatric History

- Review of symptoms: What psychiatric symptoms has the patient ever experienced? Ask about depression, anxiety, irritability, agitation, delusions, hallucinations, mood swings, suicidal thoughts or attempts, homicidal thoughts or attempts, sleep disturbance, appetite or energy disturbance, memory loss, dissociation, etc. What current psychiatric complaints or symptoms does the patient have? Are they related to current drug use or inability to stop using?
- Were psychiatric symptoms present before, during, and/or after substance use? What effects did abstinence from other drugs and alcohol and/or compliance with maintenance treatment have on psychiatric symptoms? Has the patient ever had a substance-induced psychotic disorder, mood disorder, anxiety disorder, persisting perceptual disorder, persisting amnesic disorder, persisting dementia, or sexual dysfunction?
- Has the patient ever had contact with psychiatrists or psychologists? What were previous psychiatric diagnoses? What medications were provided?
- Has the patient ever been in psychotherapy? If so, what kind and for how long? Has he or she ever been hospitalized for psychiatric treatment? If so, what precipitated hospitalization?
- What psychotropic medications have been prescribed and what was the response to each? List current psychotropic medications, prescribers of each medication, and the patient's clinical response.
- Were other treatments recommended? Was the patient compliant? What has helped the most?
- What stressors and traumas have occurred throughout life? Was the patient ever physically, emotionally, and/or sexually abused, or traumatized in other ways? If so, at what age and under what circumstances? Has the patient ever discussed such trauma with a treatment provider or received treatment for these problems?



## Family History

- Which biological relatives have a history of addiction, alcoholism, “drinking problems,” “drug problems” (including prescription drug addiction), cirrhosis or other associated medical problems, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, attempted or completed suicide or homicide, psychiatric disorders or problems, overdoses, incarceration, criminal involvement, etc.? Have any family members been in recovery from addiction?
- What other illnesses have affected the patient’s biological relatives?

## Medical History

- Perform a detailed review of systems. What medical problems or complaints does the patient have now? Which ones are or could be related to drug or alcohol use?
- Past medical history: Ask about delirium tremens (DTs), withdrawal complications, or overdoses; tuberculosis or positive purified protein derivative (PPD) skin test, HIV infection, viral hepatitis (hepatitis A, B, C, D), syphilis, gonorrhea, pelvic inflammatory disease, or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); menstrual abnormalities, pregnancy or obstetric complications, spontaneous abortion; diabetes, thyroid disease, or other endocrine problem; cancer; hypertension, endocarditis, pericarditis, cardiomyopathy, congestive heart failure, ischemic heart disease, arrhythmia, heart murmur, mycotic aneurysm, thrombophlebitis; gastritis, ulcers, pancreatitis, hepatomegaly, hepatitis, or cirrhosis; pulmonary edema, chronic cough, pneumonia, lung abscess, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; renal failure, renal calculi; sexual dysfunction; anemia, thrombocytopenia, neutropenia, lymphocytosis, or other blood disorders; lymphadenopathy; aseptic necrosis; osteoporosis; cellulitis, septic arthritis, osteomyelitis; brain, epidural, or subdural abscess; fungal meningitis; other infections; headaches, seizures, stroke, neuropathy, or other neurologic problems; physical trauma, accidents, and

hospitalizations; any other medical complications of addiction. See figure 3-11 for a listing of selected medical disorders related to drug and alcohol use.

- For any female patient, is it possible that she is pregnant? When was her last menstrual period? Is she sexually active with men? What method of birth control does she use? Does she desire to become pregnant in the near future?
- Obtain the names and addresses of all other physicians currently providing care to the patient and obtain written consent to contact all treatment providers. Does the patient have a designated primary care physician? Is he or she being treated by a number of physicians? (See chapter 6 for a discussion of privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations pertaining to substance abuse treatment information.)
- What medications is the patient taking now, and for what reason? Who prescribed the current medications? What has been the response to medication? Ask the patient to list all current medications and complementary or alternative therapies, such as vitamins, minerals, herbs, and supplements.
- Explore the use, past and present, of addicting prescription drugs. What was the pattern of use of prescription drugs? Did the patient take the medications as prescribed, or more than prescribed, or in combination with alcohol or other drugs? Has the patient received prescriptions from several physicians? Has the patient ever “lost” prescriptions in order to obtain new ones, forged or phoned in prescriptions, stolen prescription pads, split prescriptions with others, or otherwise misused prescription medications?
- Does the patient have pain problems? What pain treatments have been tried or recommended? Have opioid medications been prescribed? What

was the response to various pain treatments? What is the level of pain now?

## Sexual History

- Is the patient sexually active? How many sexual partners does the patient have? How long has he or she been involved with his or her current partner(s)? Quantify the number and gender of sexual partners over the patient's lifetime. Has the patient had sex with multiple partners or strangers? Has the patient had sex with males, females, or both?
- What specific sexual activities has the patient engaged in? Does he or she ever have sex without a condom or other barrier protection? Has he or she traded sex for money or drugs?
- Has the patient or any of his or her partners ever had or been treated for an STD? If so, which ones (syphilis, gonorrhea, HIV, chlamydia, or others)? How long ago were these treatments? How many times has the patient been treated for an STD?
- Does the patient have any current symptoms of an STD, such as genital discharge, pain, itching, sores, or lumps?
- Has the patient ever been hurt or abused by a sexual partner? Has he or she ever been sexually abused, molested, raped, or assaulted?
- Is sex satisfying for the patient? Does he or she have any problems with or concerns about his or her sexual activities or function?

## Cost/Consequences of Drug Use

- What is the patient's current level of functioning in social, family or relationship, educational, occupational, legal, physical health, and mental health arenas?
- Has functioning been affected by drug use? If so, how? What financial, familial, social, emotional, occupational, legal, medical, or spiritual problems have occurred while the patient has been using drugs or as a

result of having used drugs? Has the patient experienced legal problems, arrests, been charged with driving while intoxicated, had multiple divorces, marital discord, bankruptcy, fights, injuries, family violence, or suicidal thoughts? Describe specific problems and consequences.

- Has there been hazardous or impairing substance use? If so, describe specifics.
- Has a great deal of time been spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects? Have important social, occupational, or recreational activities been given up or reduced because of substance use?
- Has there been continued use despite adverse physical and social consequences? Has the substance use continued despite knowledge of having persistent problems that are likely to have been caused or worsened by the substance? If so, give examples.

## Compulsivity or Craving

- Does the patient report drug craving and/or urges to use? How does the patient deal with them?
- Does the patient obsess about using drugs? Is there a compulsive pattern to the drug use?

## Control

- Has loss of consistent control over drug use occurred? Does the patient feel he or she has ever lost control over use, even one time? When did this first occur? What was the situation? What happened? Has the patient often taken a substance in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended? Describe the evidence for loss of consistent control over use.
- If the patient does not think control has ever been lost, do others (family, friends, employers, physicians, or others) think differently?

## Social and Recovery Environment

- What is the quality of recovery environment for this patient (supportive, nonsupportive, or toxic)? What has been the response of family, significant others, friends, employer, and others to the patient's problems? What is the existing problem as the spouse, partner, or significant other sees it? Have any of these individuals suggested that the patient may have an alcohol or drug problem? When did they first suggest this? What do others object to about the patient's drinking or drug use? What are their concerns or complaints?
- Is the patient's neighborhood, job, or profession a factor that does not support recovery?
- What is or has been the patient's support system? Have supportive individuals been involved in Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, or similar programs? Are they supportive of the patient's getting help? Who has been alienated?
- How many friends, family, or associates are partners in drinking or using? Are alcohol or other drugs present or used in the house where the patient lives? Who is drinking or using drugs in the patient's home? What addicting drugs, either prescribed or nonprescribed, are still at home now?

## Insight, Motivation, Readiness to Change

- What is the patient's understanding of his or her problem? What does the patient understand about the disease of addiction?
- What Stage of Change is the patient in now: Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action, Maintenance, Relapse? (See [appendix G.](#)) What stages has he or she passed through in the past? How responsive is he or she to motivational enhancement therapy?

## Why Now?

- Why did the patient seek treatment or help at this time?

- Is treatment coerced or voluntary? What are the consequences if the patient does not seek help or complete treatment? How does the patient feel about these consequences?

## Detection of Drugs in Urine and Other Samples

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Physicians should become familiar with their laboratory's collection procedures, sample testing methodology, quality control and assurance procedures, and adulterant testing methodology. They must understand laboratory report forms and procedures, the drugs screened in a routine panel, other drug tests performed at the laboratory, sensitivity of tests, and cutoff levels for reporting positive or negative test results. A comprehensive discussion of urine drug testing in the primary care setting can be found in *Urine Testing in Primary Care: Dispelling the Myths & Designing Strategies* (Gourlay et al. 2002). It is advisable that physicians become acquainted with the laboratory director and other personnel who can answer questions and provide other useful information.

Initial screening typically utilizes an enzyme multiplied immunoassay test (EMIT), a radio-immunoassay (RIA), or a florescent polarization immunoassay (FPIA) test; each is based on antigen-antibody interactions and is highly sensitive for specific drugs. Gas chromatography with mass spectrometry (GC/MS) is a highly sensitive and specific test that is labor intensive and costly, and is generally used to confirm the results of screening tests.

Detection of a drug depends on usage factors (e.g., dose used, frequency of use, proximity of last use) and characteristics of the specific drug. Most common drugs of abuse (e.g., cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, marijuana) or their metabolites are readily detectable in the urine. Recent alcohol use is detectable in saliva, breath, blood, and urine samples.

Morphine (the metabolite of heroin) is detected by commercially available urine testing; however, methadone will not be detected as an opiate on some drug tests, unless a methadone assay is specifically requested. Oxycodone will cross-react only at high concentrations.

Buprenorphine does not cross-react with the detection procedures for methadone or heroin.

Although buprenorphine and its metabolite are excreted in urine, routine screening for the presence of buprenorphine is not feasible until testing kits become commercially available; none were available at the time this document was prepared.

Low-potency benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam and chlordiazepoxide) are readily detected in routine urine drug screens. However, clonazepam, flunitrazepam, alprazolam, and several other benzodiazepines may be undetected in urine samples. Since the combination of buprenorphine and benzodiazepines can be lethal ([Reynaud et al. 1998a,b](#); [Tracqui et al. 1998](#)), it is essential to screen effectively for the recent use of benzodiazepines. It may be necessary to specifically request that a sample be evaluated for benzodiazepines that are not detected on routine drug screens.

#### **Figure E–1 FRAMES: Elements of Brief Interventions**

- **FEEDBACK** of personal risk or impairment. Most successful brief interventions provide clients with some form of feedback of the results of their assessment of alcohol and other drugs.
- Emphasis on personal **RESPONSIBILITY** for change. Many brief interventions advise patients that drinking is their own responsibility and choice. The implicit or explicit message is that “What you do about your drinking is up to you.” Perceived control has been recognized as an element of motivation for behavior change and maintenance ([Miller 1985](#)).
- Clear **ADVICE** to change. Effective brief interventions contain explicit verbal or written advice to reduce or stop drinking. In fact, advice has been described as the essence of the brief intervention ([Edwards et al. 1977](#)).
- A **MENU** of alternative change options. Effective brief interventions seldom advise a single approach, but rather a general goal or a range of options. Presumably, this broad approach increases the likelihood that an individual will find an approach appropriate to his or her situation.

- Therapeutic **EMPATHY** as a counseling style. Successful interventions have emphasized a warm, reflective, empathic, and understanding approach. No reports of effective brief counseling contain aggressive, authoritarian, or coercive elements.
- Enhancement of client **SELF-EFFICACY** or optimism. It is common in brief interventions to encourage self-efficacy for change, rather than emphasizing helplessness or powerlessness. Optimism regarding the possibility of change is often embedded in effective motivational counseling.
- Ongoing followup. In addition to these six elements, effective use of brief intervention often includes repeated followup visits. At least two studies have found that a reduction in drinking occurs after the first followup visit (Elvy et al. 1988; Heather et al. 1987). However, even without the benefit of repeated followup, studies consistently document the occurrence of marked behavior change immediately following the brief intervention.

*Source:* Adapted from Miller and Sanchez 1994.

## **TIP 40: Appendix F Federation of State Medical Boards—Model Policy Guidelines for Opioid Addiction Treatment in the Medical Office**

### **Section I: Preamble**

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The (name of board) recognizes that the prevalence of addiction to heroin and other opioids has risen sharply in the United States and that the residents of the State of (name of state) should have access to modern, appropriate and effective addiction treatment. The appropriate application of up-to-date knowledge and treatment modalities can successfully treat patients who



suffer from opioid addiction and reduce the morbidity, mortality and costs associated with opioid addiction, as well as public health problems such as HIV, HBV, HCV and other infectious diseases. The Board encourages all physicians to assess their patients for a history of substance abuse and potential opioid addiction. The Board has developed these guidelines in an effort to balance the need to expand treatment capacity for opioid addicted patients with the need to prevent the inappropriate, unwise or illegal prescribing of opioids.

Until recently, physicians have been prohibited from prescribing and dispensing opioid medications in the treatment of opioid addiction, except within the confines of federally regulated opioid treatment programs. Because of the increasing number of opioid-addicted individuals and the associated public health problems, as well as the limited availability of addiction treatment programs, federal laws now enable qualified physicians to prescribe Schedule III-V medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration for office-based treatment of opioid addiction[1].

Physicians who consider office-based treatment of opioid addiction must be able to recognize the condition of drug or opioid addiction and be knowledgeable about the appropriate use of opioid agonist, antagonist, and partial agonist medications. Physicians must also demonstrate required qualifications as defined under and in accordance with the "Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000" (DATA) (Public Law 106-310, Title XXXV, Sections 3501 and 3502) and obtain a waiver from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), as authorized by the Secretary of HHS. In order to qualify for a waiver, physicians must hold a current license in the State of (name of state) and, at a minimum, meet one or more of the following conditions to be considered as qualified to treat opioid addicted patients in an office-based setting in this state:

- Subspecialty board certification in addiction psychiatry from the American Board of Medical Specialties
- Subspecialty board certification in addiction medicine from the American Osteopathic Association
- Addiction certification from the American Society of Addiction Medicine

- Completion of not less than 8 hours of training related to the treatment and management of opioid-dependent patients provided by the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry, the American Medical Association, the American Osteopathic Association, the American Psychiatric Association, or other organization approved by the board.
- Participation as an investigator in one or more clinical trials leading to the approval of a narcotic drug in Schedule III, IV, or V or a combination of such drugs for treatment of opioid addicted patients (must be evidenced by a statement submitted to the Secretary of Health and Human Services by the sponsor of such approved drug).
- Additional qualification criteria may be added through legislative enactment.

In addition to the waiver, physicians must have a valid DEA registration number and a DEA identification number that specifically authorizes such office-based treatment.

The waiver to provide addiction treatment under DATA is granted by the Secretary of HHS, presumably through SAMHSA, no later than 45 days after receipt of the physician's written notification. Upon request from SAMHSA, the Attorney General, presumably through DEA, will automatically assign the physician an identification number that will be used with the physician's DEA registration number. However, if SAMHSA has not acted on the physician's request for a waiver by the end of this 45-day period, DEA will automatically assign the physician an identification number.

Furthermore, if a physician wishes to prescribe or dispense narcotic drugs for maintenance or detoxification treatment on an emergency basis in order to facilitate the treatment of an individual patient before the 45-day waiting period has elapsed, the physician must notify SAMHSA and the DEA of the physician's intent to provide such treatment.

The Board recognizes that new treatment modalities offer an alternative in the treatment of opioid addiction. Based on appropriate patient assessment and evaluation, it may be both feasible and desirable to provide office-based treatment of opioid addicted patients with Schedules III-V opioid medications approved for such use by the FDA and regulated in such use by Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)/SAMHSA. Physicians are referred to the Buprenorphine Clinical Practice Guidelines, available at the CSAT/SAMHSA, Division of Pharmacologic Therapies, Second Floor, 1 Choke Cherry Road, Rockville, MD 20857; (301) 443-7614 or <http://www.dpt.samhsa.gov/>.

The medical recognition and management of opioid addiction should be based upon current knowledge and research and includes the use of both pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical modalities. Prior to initiating treatment, physicians should be knowledgeable about addiction treatment and all available pharmacologic treatment agents as well as available ancillary services to support both the physician and patient. In order to undertake treatment of opioid addicted patients, in accordance with these guidelines, physicians must demonstrate a capacity to refer patients for appropriate counseling and other ancillary services.

The (state medical board) is obligated under the laws of the State of (name of state) to protect the public health and safety. The Board recognizes that inappropriate prescribing of controlled substances, including opioids, may lead to drug diversion and abuse by individuals who seek them for other than legitimate medical use. Physicians must be diligent in preventing the diversion of drugs for illegitimate and nonmedical uses.

Qualified physicians need not fear disciplinary action from the Board or other state regulatory or enforcement agency for appropriate prescribing, dispensing or administering approved opioid drugs in Schedules III, IV, or V, or combinations thereof, for a legitimate medical purpose in the usual course of opioid addiction treatment. The Board will consider appropriate prescribing, ordering, administering, or dispensing of these medications for opioid addiction to be for a legitimate medical purpose if based on accepted scientific knowledge of the treatment of opioid addiction and in compliance with applicable state and federal law.

The Board will determine the appropriateness of prescribing based on the physician's overall treatment of the patient and on available documentation of treatment plans and outcomes. The goal is to document and treat the patient's addiction while effectively addressing other aspects of the patient's functioning, including physical, psychological, medical, social and work-related factors. The following guidelines are not intended to define complete or best practice, but rather to communicate what the Board considers to be within the boundaries of accepted professional practice.

## Section II: Guidelines

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The Board has adopted the following guidelines when evaluating the documentation and treatment of opioid addiction under DATA:

### Compliance With Controlled Substances Laws and Regulations

Generally, to prescribe and dispense Schedules III-V opioid medications for the treatment of opioid addiction under DATA, the physician must be licensed in the state, have a valid DEA controlled substances registration and identification number, comply with federal and state regulations applicable to controlled substances, and have a current waiver issued by SAMHSA. To obtain this waiver, the physician must submit written notification to the Secretary of HHS of their intent to provide this treatment modality, certifying the physician's qualifications and listing his/her DEA registration number. SAMHSA will then notify DEA whether a waiver has been granted. If SAMHSA grants the physician a waiver, DEA will issue the qualifying physician an identification number. In addition to these requirements, the DATA limits the number of patients that a physician or a group practice is permitted to treat to 30. This numerical limitation may be changed by regulation in the future.

Physicians are specifically prohibited from delegating prescribing opioids for detoxification and/or maintenance treatment purposes to non-physicians. Physicians are referred to DEA regulations (21CFR, Part 1300 to end) and the DEA Physician's Manual [www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov) and

(any relevant documents issued by the state medical board) for specific rules governing issuance of controlled substances prescriptions as well as applicable state regulations.

## Evaluation of the Patient

A recent, complete medical history and physical examination must be documented in the medical record. The medical record should document the nature of the patient's addiction(s), evaluate underlying or coexisting diseases or conditions, the effect on physical and psychological function, and history of substance abuse and any treatments therefor. The medical record should also document the suitability of the patient for office-based treatment based upon recognized diagnostic criteria.[2]

## DSM-IV-TR Substance Dependence Criteria [3]

A maladaptive pattern of substance use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by three (or more) of the following, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period:

- tolerance, as defined by either of the following:
  - a need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect, or
  - markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance
- withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following:
  - the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance, or
  - the same (or closely related) substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms
- the substance is often taken in larger amounts or over longer period than was intended
- there is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use

- a great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance (e.g., visiting multiple doctors or driving long distances), use the substance (e.g., chain-smoking), or recover from its effects
- important social, occupational or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use
- the substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance (e.g., current cocaine use despite recognition of cocaine-induced depression, or continued drinking despite recognition that an ulcer was made worse by alcohol consumption)

## Treatment Plan

The written treatment plan should state objectives that will be used to determine treatment success, such as freedom from intoxication, improved physical function, psychosocial function and compliance and should indicate if any further diagnostic evaluations are planned, as well as counseling, psychiatric management or other ancillary services. This plan should be reviewed periodically. After treatment begins, the physician should adjust drug therapy to the individual medical needs of each patient. Treatment goals, other treatment modalities or a rehabilitation program should be evaluated and discussed with the patient. If possible, every attempt should be made to involve significant others or immediate family members in the treatment process, with the patient's consent. The treatment plan should also contain contingencies for treatment failure (i.e., due to failure to comply with the treatment plan, abuse of other opioids, or evidence that the Schedules III-V medications are not being taken).

## Informed Consent and Agreement for Treatment

The physician should discuss the risks and benefits of the use of these approved opioid medications with the patient and, with appropriate consent of the patient, significant other(s), family members, or guardian. The patient should receive opioids from only one physician and/or one pharmacy when possible. The physician should employ the use of a written agreement

between physician and patient addressing such issues as (1) alternative treatment options; (2) regular toxicologic testing for drugs of abuse and therapeutic drug levels (if available and indicated); (3) number and frequency of all prescription refills and (4) reasons for which drug therapy may be discontinued (i.e.; violation of agreement).

## Periodic Patient Evaluation

Patients should be seen at reasonable intervals (at least weekly during initial treatment) based upon the individual circumstance of the patient. Periodic assessment is necessary to determine compliance with the dosing regimen, effectiveness of treatment plan, and to assess how the patient is handling the prescribed medication. Once a stable dosage is achieved and urine (or other toxicologic) tests are free of illicit drugs, less frequent office visits may be initiated (monthly may be reasonable for patients on a stable dose of the prescribed medication(s) who are making progress toward treatment objectives). Continuation or modification of opioid therapy should depend on the physician's evaluation of progress toward stated treatment objectives such as (1) absence of toxicity (2) absence of medical or behavioral adverse effects (3) responsible handling of medications (4) compliance with all elements of the treatment plan (including recovery-oriented activities, psychotherapy and/or other psychosocial modalities) and (5) abstinence from illicit drug use. If reasonable treatment goals are not being achieved, the physician should re-evaluate the appropriateness of continued treatment.

## Consultation

The physician should refer the patient as necessary for additional evaluation and treatment in order to achieve treatment objectives. The physician should pursue a team approach to the treatment of opioid addiction, including referral for counseling and other ancillary services. Ongoing communication between the physician and consultants is necessary to ensure appropriate compliance with the treatment plan. This may be included in the formal treatment agreement between the physician and patient. Special attention should be given to those patients who are at risk for misusing their medications and those whose living or work arrangements pose a risk for medication misuse or diversion. The management of addiction in

patients with comorbid psychiatric disorders requires extra care, monitoring, documentation and consultation with or referral to a mental health professional.

## Medical Records

The prescribing physician should keep accurate and complete records to include (1) the medical history and physical examination; (2) diagnostic, therapeutic and laboratory results; (3) evaluations and consultations; (4) treatment objectives; (5) discussion of risks and benefits; (6) treatments; (7) medications (including date, type, dosage, and quantity prescribed and/or dispensed to each patient); (8) a physical inventory of all Schedules III, IV, and V controlled substances on hand that are dispensed by the physician in the course of maintenance or detoxification treatment of an individual; (9) instructions and agreements; and (10) periodic reviews. Records should remain current and be maintained in an accessible manner and readily available for review. The physician must adhere to the special confidentiality requirements of 42CFR, Part 2, which apply to the treatment of drug and alcohol addiction, including the prohibition against release of records or other information, except pursuant to a proper patient consent or court order in full compliance with 42CFR2, or the Federal or State officials listed in 42CFR2, or in cases of true medical emergency or for the mandatory reporting of child abuse.

## Section III: Definitions

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For the purposes of these guidelines, the following terms are defined as follows:

**Addiction:** A primary, chronic, neurobiologic disease, with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. It is characterized by behaviors that include one or more of the following: impaired control over drug use, compulsive use, continued use despite harm and craving.

**Agonists:** Agonist drugs are substances that bind to the receptor and produce a response that is similar in effect to the natural ligand that would activate it. Full mu opioid agonists activate mu



receptors, and increasing doses of full agonists produce increasing effects. Most opioids that are abused, such as morphine and heroin are full mu opioid agonists.

**“Approved Schedule III-V Opioids”:** Opioids referred to by the DATA, specifically approved by the FDA for treatment of opioid dependence or addiction.

**Antagonists:** Antagonists bind to but do not activate receptors. They prevent the receptor from being activated by an agonist compound. Examples of opioid antagonists are naltrexone and naloxone.

**Maintenance Treatment:** Maintenance treatment means the dispensing for a period in excess of 21 days of an opioid medication(s) at stable dosage levels in the treatment of an individual for dependence upon heroin or other morphine-like drugs.

**Opioid Dependence:** A maladaptive pattern of substance use, leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, manifested by 3 or more of the following, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period:

- A need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or desired effect or markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of substance;
- The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance or the same (or closely related) substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms;
- The substance was taken in larger amounts or over a longer period of time than was intended;
- There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use;
- Significant time is spent on activities to obtain the substance, use the substance, or recover from its effects;

- Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are discontinued or reduced because of substance use;
- Substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent physical or psychological problem that is caused or exacerbated by the substance.

**Opioid Drug:** Opioid drug means any drug having an addiction-forming or addiction-sustaining liability similar to morphine or being capable of conversion into a drug having such addiction-forming or addiction sustaining liability. (this is referred to as an opiate in the Controlled Substances Act)

**Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) (sometimes referred to as a methadone clinic or narcotic treatment program):** Opioid treatment program means a licensed program or practitioner engaged in the treatment of opioid addicted patients with approved Scheduled II opioids (methadone and/or LAAM).

**Partial Agonists:** Partial agonists occupy and activate receptors. At low doses, like full agonists, increasing doses of the partial agonist produce increasing effects. However, unlike full agonists, the receptor-activation produced by a partial agonist reaches a plateau over which increasing doses do not produce an increasing effect. The plateau may have the effect of limiting the partial agonist's therapeutic activity as well as its toxicity. Buprenorphine is an example of a partial agonist.

**Physical Dependence:** A state of adaptation that is manifested by a drug class specific withdrawal syndrome that can be produced by abrupt cessation, rapid dose reduction, decreasing blood level of the drug, and/or administration of an antagonist.

**Qualified Physician:** A physician, licensed in the State of (name of state) who holds a current waiver issued by SAMHSA (as authorized by the Secretary of HHS) and meets one or more of the conditions set forth in Section 1. In addition, a physician must have a valid DEA registration and identification number authorizing the physician to conduct office-based treatment.

**Substance Abuse:** A maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by one or more of the following, occurring within a 12-month period:

- Recurrent substance use resulting in a failure to fulfill major role obligations at work, school, or home;
- Recurrent substance use in situations in which it is physically hazardous;
- Recurrent substance-related legal problems;
- Continued substance use despite having persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the substance.

**Tolerance:** A state of adaptation in which exposure to a drug induces changes that result in diminution of one or more of the drug's effects over time.

**Waiver:** A documented authorization from the Secretary of HHS issued by SAMHSA under the DATA that exempts qualified physicians from the rules applied to OTPs. Implementation of the waiver includes possession of a valid DEA certificate with applicable suffix.

Footnotes:

[1] ([Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000](#) 2000), Public Law 106-310, Title XXXV, Section 3501 and 3502.

[2] Buprenorphine Clinical Practice Guidelines, Table 3-1.

[3] American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed., Text Revision, Washington, D.C.

This document can be found on model policy guidelines at <http://www.fsmb.org>, then click on policy documents. The recommendations contained herein were adopted as policy by the House of Delegates of the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc., April 2002.

## TIP 40: Appendix G Stages of Change

As an important component of effective treatment planning, physicians may find it helpful to determine which stage of change characterizes the patient. There are six stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and relapse. Patients can be conceptualized as moving along a continuum marked by these stages, each of which is described below. Readiness to change and stage of change can be evaluated by interview and instruments such as the Stages of Change Readiness and Treatment Eagerness Scale (Miller and Tonigan 1996). Stages of change are clearly linked to a patient's motivation. It may be possible for a physician to increase motivation (e.g., through motivational enhancement therapy) and thus help a patient move from an early stage of change (e.g., contemplation) to a more active and healthy stage (e.g., action). The discussion of Stages of Changes below is excerpted from Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) TIP 35, *Enhancing Motivation for Change in Substance Abuse Treatment* (CSAT 1999b). (See <http://www.kap.samhsa.gov/products/manuals/index.htm>.)

### Transtheoretical Model of Stages of Change

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It is important to note that the change process is cyclical, and individuals typically move back and forth between the stages and cycle through the stages at different rates. In one individual, this movement through the stages can vary in relation to different behaviors or objectives. Individuals can move through stages quickly. Sometimes, they move so rapidly that it is difficult to pinpoint where they are because change is a dynamic process. It is not uncommon, however, for individuals to linger in the early stages.

For most substance-using individuals, progress through the stages of change is circular or spiral in nature, not linear. In this model, recurrence is a normal event because many clients cycle through the different stages several times before achieving stable change. The six stages and the issue of relapse are described below.

#### Precontemplation

During the precontemplation stage, substance-using individuals are not considering change and do not intend to change behaviors in the foreseeable future. They may be partly or completely unaware that a problem exists, that they have to make changes, and that they may need help in this endeavor. Alternatively, they may be unwilling or too discouraged to change their behavior. Individuals in this stage usually have not experienced adverse consequences or crises because of their substance use and often are not convinced that their pattern of use is problematic or even risky.

## Contemplation

As these individuals become aware that a problem exists, they begin to perceive that there may be cause for concern and reasons to change. Typically, they are ambivalent, simultaneously seeing reasons to change and reasons not to change. Individuals in this stage are still using substances, but they are considering the possibility of stopping or cutting back in the near future. At this point, they may seek relevant information, reevaluate their substance use behavior, or seek help to support the possibility of changing behavior. They typically weigh the positive and negative aspects of making a change. It is not uncommon for individuals to remain in this stage for extended periods, often for years, vacillating between wanting and not wanting to change.

## Preparation

When an individual perceives that the envisioned advantages of change and adverse consequences of substance use outweigh any positive features of continuing use at the same level and maintaining the status quo, the decisional balance tips in favor of change. Once instigation to change occurs, an individual enters the preparation stage, during which commitment is strengthened. Preparation entails more specific planning for change, such as making choices about whether treatment is needed and, if so, what kind. Preparation also entails an examination of one's perceived capabilities—or self-efficacy—for change. Individuals in the preparation stage are still using substances, but typically they intend to stop using very soon. They may have already attempted to reduce or stop use on their own or may be experimenting

now with ways to quit or cut back (DiClemente and Prochaska 1998). They begin to set goals for themselves and make commitments to stop using, even telling close associates or significant others about their plans.

## Action

Individuals in the action stage choose a strategy for change and begin to pursue it. At this stage, clients are actively modifying their habits and environment. They are making drastic lifestyle changes and may be faced with particularly challenging situations and the physiological effects of withdrawal. Clients may begin to reevaluate their own self-image as they move from excessive or hazardous use to nonuse or safe use. For many, the action stage can last from 3 to 6 months following termination or reduction of substance use. For some, it is a honeymoon period before they face more daunting and longstanding challenges.

## Maintenance

During the maintenance stage, efforts are made to sustain the gains achieved during the action stage. Maintenance is the stage at which individuals work to sustain sobriety and prevent recurrence (Marlatt and Gordon 1985). Extra precautions may be necessary to keep from reverting to problematic behaviors. Individuals learn how to detect and guard against dangerous situations and other triggers that may cause them to use substances again. In most cases, individuals attempting long-term behavior change do return to use at least once and revert to an earlier stage (Prochaska et al. 1992). Recurrence of symptoms can be viewed as part of the learning process. Knowledge about the personal cues or dangerous situations that contribute to recurrence is useful information for future change attempts. Maintenance requires prolonged behavioral change—by remaining abstinent or moderating consumption to acceptable, targeted levels—and continued vigilance for a minimum of 6 months to several years, depending on the target behavior (Prochaska and DiClemente 1992).

## Relapse

Most individuals do not immediately sustain the new changes they are attempting to make, and a return to substance use after a period of abstinence is the rule rather than the exception (Brownell et al. 1986; Prochaska and DiClemente 1992). These experiences contribute information that can facilitate or hinder subsequent progression through the stages of change. *Recurrence*, often referred to as relapse, is the event that triggers the individual’s return to earlier stages of change and recycling through the process. Individuals may learn that certain goals are unrealistic, certain strategies are ineffective, or certain environments are not conducive to successful change. Most substance users will require several revolutions through the stages of change to achieve successful recovery (DiClemente and Scott 1997). After a return to substance use, clients usually revert to an earlier change stage—not always to maintenance or action, but more often to some level of contemplation. They may even become precontemplators again, temporarily unwilling or unable to try to change soon. Resuming substance use and returning to a previous stage of change should not be considered a failure and need not become a disastrous or prolonged recurrence. A recurrence of symptoms does not necessarily mean that a client has abandoned a commitment to change.

## Stages of Change Readiness and Treatment Eagerness Scale (SOCRATES 8D)

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INSTRUCTIONS: Please read the following statements carefully. Each one describes a way that you might (or might not) feel *about your drug use*. For each statement, circle one number from 1 to 5 to indicate how much you agree or disagree with it *right now*. Please circle one and only one number for every statement.

	<b>NO! Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Disagree</b>	<b>? Undecided or Unsure</b>	<b>Yes Agree</b>	<b>YES! Strongly Agree</b>
1. I really want to make changes in	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>NO! Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Disagree</b>	<b>? Undecided or Unsure</b>	<b>Yes Agree</b>	<b>YES! Strongly Agree</b>
my use of drugs.					
2. Sometimes I wonder if I am an addict.	1	2	3	4	5
3. If I don't change my drug use soon, my problems are going to get worse.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have already started making some changes in my use of drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I was using drugs too much at one time, but I've managed to change that.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sometimes I wonder if my drug use is hurting other people.	1	2	3	4	5



	<b>NO! Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Disagree</b>	<b>? Undecided or Unsure</b>	<b>Yes Agree</b>	<b>YES! Strongly Agree</b>
7. I have a drug problem.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I'm not just thinking about changing my drug use, I'm already doing something about it.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I have already changed my drug use, and I am looking for ways to keep from slipping back to my old pattern.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have serious problems with drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Sometimes I wonder if I am in control of my drug use.	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>NO! Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Disagree</b>	<b>? Undecided or Unsure</b>	<b>Yes Agree</b>	<b>YES! Strongly Agree</b>
12. My drug use is causing a lot of harm.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am actively doing things now to cut down or stop my use of drugs.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I want help to keep from going back to the drug problems that I had before.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I know that I have a drug problem.	1	2	3	4	5
16. There are times when I wonder if I use drugs too much.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am a drug addict.	1	2	3	4	5

	<b>NO! Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>No Disagree</b>	<b>? Undecided or Unsure</b>	<b>Yes Agree</b>	<b>YES! Strongly Agree</b>
18. I am working hard to change my drug use.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I have made some changes in my drug use, and I want some help to keep from going back to the way I used before.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: Miller and Tonigan 1996. SOCRATES 8D and SOCRATES 8D Scoring Sheet. Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions (CASAA), Assessment Instruments. Available at <http://casaa.unm.edu/inst/inst.html>. Reprinted with permission.

### SOCRATES Scoring Form (19-Item Version 8.0)

Transfer the client's answers from questionnaire (see note below):

	<b>Recognitio n</b>	<b>Ambivalen ce</b>	<b>Takin g Steps</b>
1 _____		2 _____	

	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Ambivalence</b>	<b>Taking Steps</b>
3 _____			4 _____
			5 _____
		6 _____	
7 _____			8 _____
			9 _____
10 _____ —		11 _____ —	
12 _____ —			13 _____ —
			14 _____ —
15 _____ —		16 _____ —	
17 _____ —			18 _____ —
			19 _____

		<b>Recognition</b>		<b>Ambivalence</b>		<b>Taking Steps</b>
TOTAL	Re_____		Am_____		Ts_____	
S	—		—		—	
Possible Range:		7–35		4–20		8–40

### SOCRATES Profile Sheet (19-Item Version 8A)

INSTRUCTIONS: From the SOCRATES Scoring Form (19-Item Version) transfer the total scale scores into the empty boxes at the bottom of the Profile Sheet. Then for each scale, CIRCLE the same value above it to determine the decile range.

<b>DECILE SCORES</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Ambivalence</b>	<b>Taking Steps</b>
90 Very High		19–20	39–40
80		18	37–38
70 High	35	17	36
60	34	16	34–35
50 Medium	32–33	15	33

<b>DECILE SCORES</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Ambivalence</b>	<b>Taking Steps</b>
40	31	14	31-32
30 Low	29-30	12-13	30
20	27-28	9-11	26-29
10 Very Low	7-26	4-8	8-25
RAW SCORES (from Scoring Sheet)	Re=	Am=	Ts=

These interpretive ranges are based on a sample of 1,726 adult men and women presenting for treatment of alcohol problems through Project MATCH. Note that individual scores are therefore being ranked as low, medium, or high *relative to people already presenting for alcohol treatment*.

## Guidelines for Interpretation of SOCRATES-8 Scores

Using the SOCRATES Profile Sheet, circle the client's raw score within each of the three scale columns. This provides information as to whether the client's scores are low, average, or high *relative to individuals already seeking treatment for alcohol problems*. The following are provided as general guidelines for interpretation of scores, but it is wise in an individual case also to examine individual item responses for additional information.

### RECOGNITION

HIGH scorers directly acknowledge that they are having problems related to their drinking, tending to express a desire for change and to perceive that harm will continue if they do not change.

LOW scorers deny that alcohol is causing them serious problems, reject diagnostic labels such as “problem drinker” and “alcoholic,” and do not express a desire for change.

## AMBIVALENCE

HIGH scorers say that they sometimes wonder if they are in control of their drinking, are drinking too much, are hurting other individuals, and/or are alcoholic. Thus a high score reflects ambivalence or uncertainty. A high score here reflects some openness to reflection, as might be particularly expected in the contemplation stage of change.

LOW scorers say that *they do not wonder* whether they drink too much, are in control, are hurting others, or are alcoholic. Note that an individual may score low on ambivalence *either* because they “know” their drinking is causing problems (high Recognition), *or* because they “know” that they do not have drinking problems (low Recognition). Thus a low Ambivalence score should be interpreted in relation to the Recognition score.

## TAKING STEPS

HIGH scorers report that they are already doing things to make a positive change in their drinking, and may have experienced some success in this regard. Change is underway, and they may want help to persist or to prevent backsliding. A high score on this scale has been found to be predictive of successful change.

LOW scorers report that they are not currently doing things to change their drinking and have not made such changes recently.

## Resources for More Information

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Recovery Attitude and Treatment Evaluator (RAATE) ([Mee-Lee 1988](#)).

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/raate.htm>

University of Rhode Island Change Assessment (URICA) ([McConaughy et al. 1983](#)).

<http://www.uri.edu/research/cprc/Measures/urica.htm>

SOCRATES (Miller and Tonigan 1996). <http://casaa.unm.edu/inst/forms/socratesv8.pdf>

Readiness to Change Questionnaire (Rollnick et al. 1992).

<http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/rtcq.htm>

[http://www.dva.gov.au/health/provider/care\\_plans/change.htm](http://www.dva.gov.au/health/provider/care_plans/change.htm)

## **TIP 40: Appendix H Sample Treatment Agreement/Contract**

Treatment agreements/contracts are often employed in the treatment of addiction to make explicit the expectations regarding patient cooperation and involvement in the treatment process. On the following page is a sample addiction treatment agreement/contract that may be a useful tool in working with patients in an office-based setting.

As a participant in the buprenorphine protocol for treatment of opioid abuse and dependence, I freely and voluntarily agree to accept this treatment agreement/contract, as follows:

I agree to keep, and be on time to, all my scheduled appointments with the doctor and his/her assistant.

I agree to conduct myself in a courteous manner in the physician's office.

I agree not to arrive at the office intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. If I do, the doctor will not see me, and I will not be given any medication until my next scheduled appointment.

I agree not to sell, share, or give any of my medication to another individual. I understand that such mishandling of my medication is a serious violation of this agreement and would result in my treatment being terminated without recourse for appeal.

I agree not to deal, steal, or conduct any other illegal or disruptive activities in the doctor's office.



I agree that my medication (or prescriptions) can be given to me only at my regular office visits. Any missed office visits will result in my not being able to get medication until the next scheduled visit.

I agree that the medication I receive is my responsibility and that I will keep it in a safe, secure place. I agree that lost medication will not be replaced regardless of the reasons for such loss.

I agree not to obtain medications from any physicians, pharmacies, or other sources without informing my treating physician. I understand that mixing buprenorphine with other medications, especially benzodiazepines such as valium and other drugs of abuse, can be dangerous. I also understand that a number of deaths have been reported among individuals mixing buprenorphine with benzodiazepines.

I agree to take my medication as the doctor has instructed and not to alter the way I take my medication without first consulting the doctor.

I understand that medication alone is not sufficient treatment for my disease, and I agree to participate in the patient education and relapse prevention programs, as provided, to assist me in my treatment.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# TIP 40: Appendix I Glossary

## 21 C.F.R. Part 291

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Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) that, among other things, sets standards for narcotic treatment and use of methadone.

## 42 C.F.R. Part 2

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Federal Regulation concerning confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient treatment records.

## 42 C.F.R. Part 8

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Federal Regulation concerning dispensing of drugs through opioid treatment programs.

## Addiction

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A *behavioral* syndrome characterized by the repeated, compulsive seeking or use of a substance despite adverse social, psychological, and/or physical consequences. Addiction is often (but not always) accompanied by physical dependence, a withdrawal syndrome, and tolerance.

## Alcoholism

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A pattern of compulsive use of alcohol in which individuals devote substantial periods of time to obtaining and consuming alcoholic beverages despite adverse psychological or physical consequences, e.g., depression, blackouts, liver disease, or other consequences. (Adapted from *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed., Text Revision [DSM-IV-TR].)

## Antagonist

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Substance that tends to nullify the effect of another (e.g., a drug that binds to a receptor without eliciting a response).

## AUDIT

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**Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test.** A screening tool for identification of alcohol use disorders.

## Biopsychosocial

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Combining biological, psychological, and social concerns or effects.

## Buprenex® (Generic: buprenorphine)

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Injectable formulation of the Schedule III narcotic (opioid) partial agonist buprenorphine. Approved for use as an analgesic. Not approved for use in the treatment of opioid addiction.

## Buprenorphine

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An opioid partial agonist that is a synthetic derivative of thebaine. Two sublingual formulations of buprenorphine, the Schedule III pharmaceuticals Subutex® (buprenorphine) and Suboxone® (buprenorphine/naloxone), received Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval in October 2000 for use in the treatment of opioid addiction. Buprenex®, an injectable formulation of buprenorphine, has previously been available in the United States and is approved for use as a parenteral analgesic.

## Buprenorphine/naloxone

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Drug combination; see separate definitions and brand name Suboxone®.

## CAGE-AID

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**CAGE** Questionnaire **A**dapted to **I**nclude **D**rugs.

## CAGE Questionnaire

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A screening tool for identification of alcohol use disorders (questions use words beginning with letters **C**, **A**, **G**, and **E** consecutively).

## Children's Health Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-310)

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Legislation (Public Law) that authorizes expanded research and services for a variety of childhood health problems, reauthorizes programs of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), addresses the problem of youth substance abuse and the violence associated with it, and works to improve the health and safety of children in child care. Title XXXV of the Children's Health Act is the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000), which authorizes qualifying physicians to treat opioid addiction in clinical settings other than the Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) setting.

## CINA

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**C**linical **I**nstitute **N**arcotic **A**ssessment Scale for Withdrawal. An interview and observation tool for assessing opioid withdrawal signs and symptoms.

## COWS

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**C**linical **O**piate **W**ithdrawal **S**cale. An interview and observation tool for assessing opioid withdrawal signs and symptoms.

## DAST 10

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**D**rug **A**buse **S**creening **T**est. A questionnaire tool for identification of drug and alcohol use disorders.

## DATA 2000

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See **D**rug **A**ddiction **T**reatment **A**ct of 2000.

## Dependence

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A condition manifested as a characteristic set of withdrawal signs and symptoms upon reduction, cessation, or loss of the active compound at cell receptors (a withdrawal syndrome).

## Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000

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Title XXXV of the Children's Health Act of 2000. The Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA 2000) establishes a waiver authority for qualifying physicians to prescribe or dispense specially approved Schedule III, IV, and V narcotic medications for the treatment of opioid addiction in clinical settings other than the Opioid Treatment Program setting.

## HIPAA

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**H**ealth **I**nsurance **P**ortability and **A**ccountability **A**ct.

## LAAM

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Closely related to methadone, the synthetic compound levo-alpha-acetyl-methadol or LAAM (Brand name: ORLAMM®), has an even longer duration of action (from 48 to 72 hours) than methadone, permitting a reduction in frequency of use. In 1994, it was approved as a Schedule II treatment drug for narcotic addiction. Both methadone and LAAM have high abuse potential. Their acceptability as narcotic treatment drugs is predicated on their ability to substitute for heroin, the long duration of action, and their mode of oral administration.

## MAST

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**M**ichigan **A**lcohol **S**creening **T**est. A questionnaire tool for identification of alcohol use disorders.

## MCV

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Mean corpuscular volume.

## Methadone

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A Schedule II synthetic opioid with pharmacologic actions similar to morphine and heroin; almost equally addictive. Approved for use in the treatment of opioid addiction in federally regulated Opioid Treatment Programs. May be administered orally, intramuscularly, and subcutaneously.

## Monotherapy

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Therapy using one drug or approach.

## Morphine

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Most active narcotic alkaloid of opium. Has powerful analgesic action; abuse leads to dependence.

## Mu agonist

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A drug that has affinity for and stimulates physiologic activity at mu opioid cell receptors. See also opioid full agonist.

## Mu opioid receptor

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A receptor on the surface of brain cells that mediates opioid analgesia, tolerance, and addiction through drug-induced activation. When an opioid agonist, or partial agonist (e.g., buprenorphine), binds to a mu opioid receptor, a series of other proteins associated with the mu receptor-signalling pathway becomes activated. Other opioid receptors are the delta and kappa receptors.

## Naloxone

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Brand name: Narcan®. An opioid antagonist, similar to naltrexone, that works by blocking opioid receptors in the brain, thereby blocking the effects of opioid full agonists (e.g., heroin, morphine) and partial agonists (e.g., buprenorphine).

## Naltrexone

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Naltrexone, a narcotic antagonist, works by blocking opioid receptors in the brain and therefore blocking the effects of opioid full agonists (e.g., heroin, morphine) and partial agonists (e.g., buprenorphine).

## NATA

---

**N**arcotic **A**ddict **T**reatment **A**ct.

## Needle embolization

---

Blood clot caused by use of a needle. If dislodged, the clot may cause death.

## Nonopioid

---

Drug or compound not related to natural or synthetic opium and related alkaloids.

## OAT

---

**O**pioid **A**gonist **T**reatment.

## Opioids

---

Drugs that are derived naturally from the flower of the opium poppy plant (e.g., morphine and heroin) and those that are synthetically produced in the lab (e.g., methadone and oxycodone).

Used therapeutically to treat pain, but also produce a sensation of euphoria—the narcotic “high.” Repeated misuse and abuse of opioids often leads to dependence and addiction.

## Opioid full agonist

---

Drugs that have affinity for and stimulate physiologic activity at opioid cell receptors (mu, kappa, and delta) that are normally stimulated by naturally occurring opioids. Repeated administration often leads to dependence and addiction.

## Opioid partial agonist

---

Drugs that can both activate and block opioid receptors, depending on the clinical situation.

Partial agonists have properties of both agonists and antagonists. The mu agonist properties of partial agonists reach a maximum at a certain dose and do not continue to increase with increasing doses of the partial agonist. This is termed the ceiling effect. The ceiling effect limits the abuse potential and untoward side effects of opioid partial agonists. The Schedule III medication buprenorphine is an opioid partial agonist.

## Parenteral

---

Not through the gastrointestinal route; for instance, given via intramuscular or intravenous injection.

## Pharmacodynamics

---

Study of the biochemical and physiological effects of drugs and the mechanisms of their actions, including correlation of these actions and effects with the drugs' chemical structure.

## Pharmacokinetics

---

Study of the action of drugs in the body over a period of time, including the processes of absorption, distribution, localization in tissues, biotransformation, and excretion.

## Pharmacotherapy

---

Treatment of disease by using medicines.

## Polysubstance abuse

---

Concurrent use or abuse of multiple substances (e.g., drinking alcohol as well as smoking tobacco, snorting cocaine, inhaling glue fumes).



## Psychosocial

---

Combining psychological and social aspects.

## SMAST

---

**Short Michigan Alcohol Screening Test.** Shortened, self-administered version of the MAST alcohol use disorder screening tool.

## SOWS

---

**Subjective Opioid Withdrawal Scale.** Self-administered scale for grading opioid withdrawal symptoms.

## Sublingual

---

Under the tongue.

## Suboxone®

---

Brand name for the Schedule III sublingual formulation of buprenorphine combined with naloxone. Received FDA approval in October 2000 for use in the treatment of opioid addiction. Naloxone is added to the formulation to decrease the likelihood of abuse of the combination via the parenteral route.

## Subutex®

---

Brand name for the Schedule III sublingual formulation of buprenorphine. Received FDA approval in October 2000 for use in the treatment of opioid addiction.

## Talc granulomatosis

---

Formation of granulomas (small nodules) as a chronic inflammatory response, in the lungs or other organs, in this case to talc or other fine powder. Talc granulomatosis may occur in drug users because many injected drugs have been adulterated with an inert substance (such as talcum powder) to cut or dilute the amount of drug.

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