



For support with problem drug use
and for other resources:

talk to your doctor or call 311

For more information, visit
nyc.gov/nycwell, text **WELL** to
65173 or call **888-NYC-WELL**
(888-692-9355).



BUPE

Do you have a problem
with prescription painkillers
or heroin?

BUPRENORPHINE
can help.

A yellow circle containing a white pill icon with the word "BUPE" written in red on it.

BUPE

WHAT IS BUPRENORPHINE?

Buprenorphine (or “bupe”) is a medication that treats addiction to opioids, such as prescription painkillers (like Vicodin, Oxycontin or Percocet) and heroin. Suboxone is a common brand name for bupe.

A yellow circle containing a white pill icon with a red "Rx" symbol on it.

Rx

HOW DOES BUPE WORK?

Bupe stops withdrawal symptoms and cravings. This makes it easier for you to stop using or cut down, so you can focus on activities that are important to you.

A yellow circle containing a white ambulance icon with a red cross on its side.

Ambulance

CAN BUPE CAUSE OVERDOSE?

It's hard to overdose on bupe by taking too much. However, it is dangerous to mix bupe with alcohol, benzodiazepines (or “benzos”, like Valium, Xanax or Ativan), or other sedating drugs. Mixing bupe with these drugs increases your risk of overdose.

A yellow circle containing a blue silhouette of a human head with a white brain inside.

Brain

DOES BUPE HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects are different for different people. They are usually mild and may include constipation, nausea, headache and insomnia.

A yellow circle containing a white calendar icon with a red date marker.

Calendar

HOW LONG DO I NEED TO TAKE BUPE?

Everybody is different. Many people may benefit from long-term treatment; other people may need bupe for a shorter time.

A yellow circle containing two arrows: a red arrow pointing right and a blue arrow pointing left.

Switch

CAN I SWITCH FROM METHADONE TO BUPE?

Yes, but talk to your doctor first to make sure you are on the right methadone dose before switching.

A yellow circle containing a blue dollar sign icon.

Dollar sign

WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE PAY FOR BUPE?

Yes. Medicaid, Medicare and most other health plans pay for bupe. Check with your health plan to make sure bupe is on the list of approved drugs.

A yellow circle containing a white doctor icon with a red cross on their chest.

Doctor

HOW DO I GET BUPE?

Ask your doctor to prescribe bupe. Once you have a prescription, you can get bupe at a pharmacy and take it at home, just like other medications.

If your doctor does not prescribe bupe, call 311, or go to samhsa.gov and search for “buprenorphine” to find other options for getting bupe.

A yellow circle containing a white pill icon with a red "Rx" symbol on it.

Rx

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT STARTING BUPE?

- Your doctor will explain that you must be in some withdrawal from opioids when starting bupe.
 - You should tell your doctor about any medications you are taking, since some can interact with bupe.
 - You should tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
 - Taking bupe is sometimes enough to help, but many people also benefit from counseling. Your doctor can help you decide whether counseling is right for you.
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