



# Q&A about opioid use disorder

## ? What is opioid use disorder (OUD)?

OUD is the problematic use of opioids, such as oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin), fentanyl, or heroin, that has serious negative effects on a person's life. Problems can include not being able to stop opioid use, having life center on getting opioids, and issues with relationships.

## ? What causes OUD?

A person can develop OUD after using opioids for only a brief period of time. Repeated opioid use can cause chemical changes in the brain that create a craving for these drugs.

## ? Is treatment available for OUD?

Yes. OUD is a chronic disease like diabetes or high blood pressure, and requires medication treatment. Medication combined with counseling or other support is called Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT).

### A. Medications can help with OUD:

#### Buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone (such as Suboxone)

- can be prescribed by some primary care providers
- does not usually require daily clinic visits
- available by mouth, injection, or implant

#### Methadone

- only available through a treatment program
- usually requires daily visits
- offered with programs to support recovery at these centers

#### Naltrexone (Vivitrol)

- can be prescribed by any health care professional
- given as a monthly injection

### B. Psychosocial support, such as counseling, teaches new ways to cope with daily life.

- Services can be provided by a clinician, psychologist, social worker, or other professional.
- Support and self-help groups can also help.

**Abstinence alone (stopping all use of opioids) is not usually successful.** It is important to seek support from friends, family, and professionals.

## ? Can a person with OUD recover?

Yes. Recovering from opioid use disorder is a life-long process. A person recovering from OUD often has to find a new way to live and make positive relationships.

## ? Can someone with OUD be cured?

Just as diabetes is not "cured" by insulin, people with OUD are not cured by medication but can learn to manage their condition.

## ? How can someone get treatment?

Your healthcare professional may prescribe medications or refer you to someone who can. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) offers a 24/7 hotline to find local support: **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**.

### For more information about OUD, visit:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness](http://www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness)
- SAMHSA: [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- National Institute on Drug Abuse: [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)



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