

Substance Use Disorders are conditions that change how the brain responds to substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and opioids like heroin and oxycontin.

When someone is addicted to a substance, the part of the brain that controls responses to positive things is altered and can cause cravings for that substance.

Substance Use Disorders can also change how you think and can make you feel happy, relaxed, sleepy, or confused.

Sometimes people who are prescribed opioids to help with pain become addicted and take them in ways that do not follow their prescription instructions. Other times people may start using alcohol and opioids recreationally because they like the way they make them feel and then become addicted.

Substance Use Disorders can gravely impact a person's life and may affect their work, education, and leave them unable to engage with their friends and family in ways they would before they became addicted.

About CITC

Established in 1983, CITC serves more than 12,000 people each year through an array of integrated programs in several service areas that help individuals achieve their full potential.

Achieving Sobriety

CITC's Recovery Services (RS) provide the most comprehensive continuum of substance abuse and re-entry services in the state through three main divisions:

- Residential services,
- Outpatient services, and
- Intervention services.

Our support services are centered on the **System of Care** approach, using case management to coordinate care and work therapy to develop job and life-skills training.

If you or someone you know would like more information about Substance Use Disorder and CITC Recovery Services, please contact us today!

CITC Recovery Services
phone: 907.793.3200
email: rs@citci.org



What is Substance Use Disorder?



Signs a Person May Have a Substance Use Disorder

Signs and symptoms can vary for each person, but here are some examples:

- Takes prescribed opioids in ways that were not intended, such as taking in higher doses than prescribed or taking for a longer period of time than prescribed.
- Seeking out non-prescription opioids.
- Consuming alcohol or tobacco more frequently or in larger amounts than intended.
- Inability to control use of substances.
- Experiencing cravings.
- Inability to take care of regular responsibilities at home, work, or school.

What is Medication-Assisted Treatment?

Medication-Assisted Treatment, or MAT, is when a person experiencing a Substance Use Disorder works with a doctor who prescribes them legal medications to help avoid relapsing after getting off of drugs or alcohol. Some of these medications also help with withdrawal symptoms when a person stops their use of drugs or alcohol. Some of these legal medications are powerful drugs themselves and are carefully prescribed because they may have street value. MAT is just one part of recovery, taking the prescribed medication happens at the same time as therapy and other treatments.

We know that people with Substance Use Disorders are more likely to recover if they get MAT than if they get therapy and other treatments without medication.

What types of medications are available?

There are many types of medications that can help a person stay in recovery. Some common prescriptions that are used as MAT are:

Tobacco Use disorder

- Nicotine (Nicotrol, Nicoderm, Nicorette)
- Bupropion (Wellbutrin, Zyban, Budeprion)
- Varenicline (Chantix and Champix)

Opioid Use Disorder

- Methadone (Dolophine and Methadose)
- Buprenorphine (Belbuca, Buprenex, Sublocade, Subutex, Suboxone)
- Naltrexone (ReVia or Vivitrol)

Alcohol Use Disorder

- Disulfiram (Antabuse)
- Naltrexone (ReVia and Vivitrol)
- Acamprosate (Campral)

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When a Person you Care about has a Substance Use Disorder



When someone is addicted to a substance, the part of the brain that controls responses to positive things is altered and can cause cravings for that substance. Substance Use Disorders can also change how you think and can make you feel happy, relaxed, sleepy, or confused.

Substance Use Disorders impact friends and family as well as the person experiencing the addiction. Often friends and family members wonder what they can do to help their loved one. They often struggle with how to manage the feelings that come with having a relationship with someone who is experiencing addiction.

Supporting Someone with a Substance Use Disorder

Recovery is a life long journey that is full of ups and downs and can be hard to navigate for everyone involved. Though it can be challenging for friends and family, having a strong support system can help someone with a Substance Use Disorder stay in recovery long term. Here are some things that may help your friend or loved one:

- **Educate yourself** about the Substance Use Disorder your loved one is experiencing. Addiction and recovery are complex topics and learning more can help you better understand what your loved one is experiencing.
- When talking about your loved one and what they are struggling with, **put the emphasis on the person.** For example, try saying “my loved one has a Substance Use Disorder” instead of “my loved one is an addict”

- Keep in mind that your loved one may not be aware how impactful their substance use is on their lives. They may also not be ready to move into recovery. Talking about the ways you see substances impacting your life and theirs and **reassuring them that help is available** is a gentle way to start the conversation.
- Encourage your loved one to participate in their community’s healing practices and traditions. **Connecting with culture can heal.**
- Continue to **invite the person to join in on activities** that you did before they had a Substance Use Disorder. A sense of belonging and connection with loved ones helps your friend or family member build a life that does not involve misusing substances.

Self-Care

It is important to take care of yourself first. Otherwise it will be hard for you to help your loved one.

Here are some ideas for taking care of yourself:

- **Eating a wide variety of foods** and exercising will give you more energy and a clearer mind.
- **Do activities that bring you joy** like going to cultural events and taking part in traditional practices
- **Talk to trusted friends** and family about your experience supporting your loved one as they struggle with their Substance Use Disorder.

Seek Out Support

Individual therapy and support groups for friends and family of people experiencing Substance Use Disorders help make sure you have the support you need to help your loved one.

Boundaries

It is important that you support your loved one without aiding their substance misuse behaviors or hurting yourself by accident. Making sure you are safe and comfortable with your relationship is important. Have realistic expectations and being clear about what you are okay with and not okay with will help you keep the relationship healthy for both of you.

Buprenorphine is one of the medications that is prescribed to help reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings from an Opioid Use Disorder.

This can help a person stop misusing opioids and stay in recovery long-term. It helps the brain return to normal functioning by controlling opioid cravings.

Buprenorphine helps a person with an Opioid Use Disorder feel normal, not high.



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Buprenorphine



How does it work?

Buprenorphine fills the spaces in the brain where the substance usually binds to. This blocks the brain from receiving the messages of euphoria or sedation the substance usually sends. When taking buprenorphine, the person taking it does not feel high.

Because buprenorphine fills those spaces in the brain where the substance usually binds to, it also “tricks” the brain into “thinking” that it is receiving the misused opioid, which reduces cravings.

If a person relapses while taking buprenorphine, there won't be many spaces in the brain available to fill to create the “high” opioids give so it can make it easier for the person to get back on track in recovery.

Naloxone is sometimes added to pills containing buprenorphine to prevent someone relapsing from getting high through injecting opioids.

What are my options?

Subutex

Tablet that dissolves under the tongue containing buprenorphine. You take it once a day.

Suboxone and Zubsolv

Small film that dissolves under the tongue containing Buprenorphine + Naloxone. You take it once a day.

Sublocade

Injection-based medication containing buprenorphine. You get an injection once a month.

Probuphine

Implants placed under your skin containing buprenorphine. You get a new implant every 6 months.

What else do I need to know?

Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, and Physicians are required to complete a special training to prescribe buprenorphine.

Your provider will ask you questions about your health and may have you take tests to make sure it is safe for you to take buprenorphine. You will also need to get a drug test.



Your provider will explain the benefits, risks, and possible side effects of taking buprenorphine.

You and your provider will work together to decide how long you need to take buprenorphine to help you stay in recovery. This could be a short period of time but it is safe to take buprenorphine for many years if you need to. If you decide your recovery is strong enough to stop taking buprenorphine, your provider will help you safely take less and less of it over time until it is safe to stop taking it entirely.

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Naltrexone

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Naltrexone is one of the medications that is prescribed to reduce cravings from an Opioid Use Disorder and an Alcohol Use Disorder. This can help a person stop misusing opioids and alcohol and stay in recovery long-term. It helps the brain return to normal functioning by controlling cravings.

How does it work?

Naltrexone fills the spaces in the brain where the substance usually binds to. This blocks the brain from receiving the messages of euphoria or sedation the substance usually sends.

Because naltrexone fills those spaces in the brain where the substance usually binds to, it also reduces cravings.

If a person relapses while taking naltrexone, there won't be many spaces in the brain available to fill to create the "high" or intoxication opioids or alcohol can provide. This makes it easier for the person to get back on track and stay in recovery.



What are my options:

Vivitrol: injection-based medication containing Naltrexone. You get an injection once a month.

Naltrexone is also available as a pill that you take once a day but is used less often because it is less effective than a monthly injection.

What else do I need to know?

You need to stop using opioids for at least 7 days before you can start taking naltrexone. Your provider will ask you questions about your health and may have you take tests to make sure it is safe for you to take Naltrexone. You will also need to get a drug test.

Your provider will also explain the benefits and risks of taking naltrexone.

You and your provider will work together to decide how long you need to take Naltrexone to help you stay in recovery. This could be a short period of time, but it is safe to take Naltrexone for many years if you need to. If you decide your recovery is strong enough to stop taking Naltrexone, your provider will help you stop taking it safely.

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Medication-Assisted Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder



Staying in recovery from an alcohol use disorder can be challenging. Medication-assisted treatment can be a helpful tool for remaining in recovery long term. Taking a medication in combination with counseling and other support can help a person return to their regular life and responsibilities sooner.



What are my options?

Acamprosate: Used to help reduce cravings for alcohol. It is a tablet that is taken three times a day.

Disulfiram: Produces unpleasant reaction to alcohol to break the positive association with intoxication. Prescribed as tablet form to be taken once a day.

Naltrexone: Blocks the euphoric feeling associated with intoxication. Can help reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings. It is most often prescribed as an injection-based medication containing Naltrexone. This form of the medication is also called Vivitrol. Patients get an injection once a month. Naltrexone is also available as a pill that you take once a day but is used less often because it less effective than a monthly injection.

What else do I need to know?

Your provider will ask you questions about your health and may have you take tests to make sure it is safe for you to take one of these medications. You will also need to get a drug test.

Your provider will also explain the benefits and risks of taking these medications.

You and your provider will work together to decide how long you need to take these medications to help you stay in recovery. This could be a short period of time, but it is safe to take these medications for many years if you need to. If you decide your recovery is strong enough to stop taking medication, your provider will help you stop taking it safely.