


# Breaking the Cycle of Opioid Use Disorder

**You are not alone  
on the road to recovery.**



Beginning the recovery journey is often a difficult and uncomfortable, but ultimately rewarding, process. Opioid use disorder (OUD) is a chronic, relapsing disease of the brain. As such, engaging in medically supervised withdrawal to manage the physical discomfort is the first step. From there, recovery often involves both medications for OUD (MOUD) and psychosocial interventions. Advanced practice nurses can partner with you in your recovery to guide you in overcoming the physical and emotional obstacles preventing you from obtaining your optimal quality of life.

## Medications Approved for the Treatment of OUD

### **Methadone** Full Opioid

- ◆ Blocks effects of other opioids.
- ◆ **Controls withdrawal symptoms and reduces cravings.**
- ◆ Only available in treatment centers and hospitals.
- ◆ Taken by mouth.
- ◆ **Common side effects:** restlessness, nausea, vomiting, slow breathing, itchy skin, heavy sweating, constipation, sexual problems.

**You don't have  
to do this  
alone.**

### **Buprenorphine** Partial Opioid

- ◆ Blocks effects of other opioids.
- ◆ **Controls withdrawal symptoms and reduces cravings.**
- ◆ Available in outpatient settings: primary care, specialists, etc.
- ◆ Taken by mouth or long-acting injectable.
- ◆ **Common side effects:** constipation, headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drowsiness, fatigue, sweating, dry mouth, tooth decay, muscle aches and cramps, inability to sleep, fever, blurred vision or dilated pupils, tremors, palpitations, disturbance in attention.

### **Naltrexone** Opioid Blocker

- ◆ Not an opioid.
- ◆ **Blocks euphoric effects of opioids and reduces cravings**
- ◆ Given to maintain recovery from OUD after medically supervised withdrawal.
- ◆ Available in outpatient settings: primary care, specialists, etc.
- ◆ Taken by mouth or long-acting injectable.
- ◆ **Common side effects:** nausea, sleepiness, headache, dizziness, vomiting, decreased appetite, painful joints, muscle cramps, cold symptoms, trouble sleeping, toothache.

**Treatment has been shown to improve health and reduce disability, symptoms, pain, worry, anxiety and depression**

Sources: Ledger, J. (2020). Opioid Use Disorder. Retrieved from <https://www.yalemedicine.org/conditions/opioid-use-disorder>; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2021). TIP 63: Medications for Opioid Use Disorder. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/ebp/tip-63-medications-opioid-use-disorder>; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2022). MAT Medications, Counseling, and Related Conditions. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/medications-counseling-related-conditions>.

# Tools for Treatment Success

## Comfort Medications

- ◆ **Clonidine:** for severe headache, elevated blood pressure and racing heart.
- ◆ **Dicyclomine:** for abdominal cramping.
- ◆ **Hydroxyzine:** for anxiety and insomnia.
- ◆ **Ibuprofen:** for aches and pain.
- ◆ **Ondansetron:** for nausea and vomiting.

### What is Naloxone?

Naloxone is an emergency medication to reverse opioid overdose. It is NOT a treatment, but rather a means to maintain life while emergency services are engaged. Those receiving treatment for pain management and/or OUD should be prescribed naloxone and keep it with them at all times. Your health care professional can show you and your family how to administer this potentially life-saving drug.

### Questions you may be asked at each visit:

- ◆ What substances have you used since your last appointment?
- ◆ What issues have you encountered related to your substance use?
- ◆ What therapies and coping strategies have you used since your last visit?
- ◆ Who can you call on if you need support in your recovery?

## If you need help:

National Helpline  
**1-800-662-HELP (4357)**

Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

## Treatment Goals and Triggers

Goals are things you would like to accomplish. In addition to goals, it's important to recognize triggers for opioid use and identify alternative behaviors to maintain recovery.

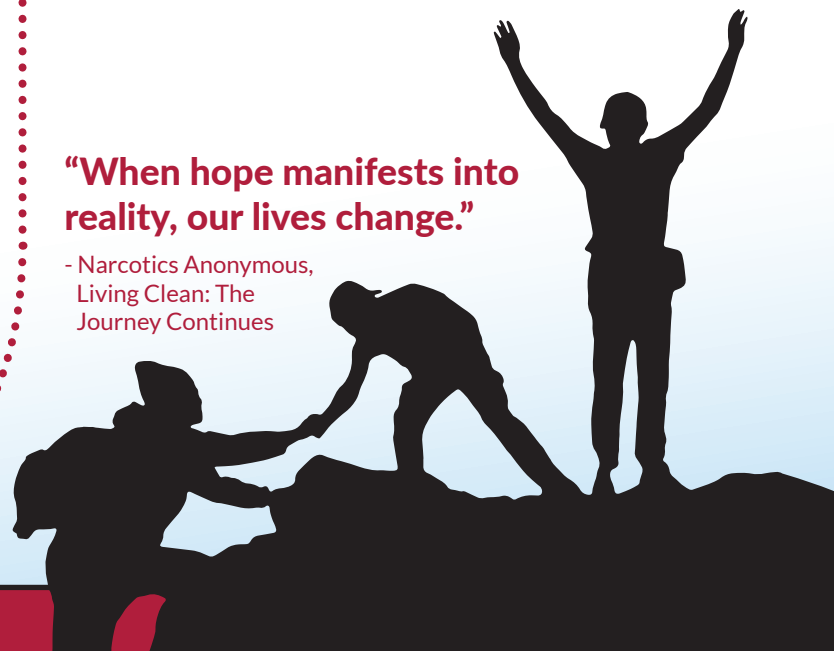
**My treatment goals:**

**My triggers for opioid use:**

**Ways I can cope or manage stress without using opioids:**

**“When hope manifests into reality, our lives change.”**

- Narcotics Anonymous,  
Living Clean: The  
Journey Continues



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