

## Your Guide to Safely Taking buprenorphine at Home

### **1. Your brain prefers buprenorphine to any other opioid (like heroin or oxycodone).**

**What does this mean?** You must wait until you feel like you are withdrawing to start the medication - which typically happens 12 hours after taking heroin/fentanyl or prescription pills or 36-72 hours after taking methadone. The reason why you must wait is because if you take buprenorphine after recent use of an opioid you will go into withdrawal within 30 minutes of taking the medication. The worse you feel when you begin the medication, the better it will make you feel after you take it. There are medications that contain both buprenorphine and naloxone, including the brand name Suboxone. The naloxone in Suboxone and similar medications is inactive if taken as directed but if the Suboxone is smoked, snorted, or injected, the naloxone is activated and will cause instant and intense withdrawal.

### **2. Buprenorphine is taken as a film or tablet placed under the tongue.**

**What does this mean?** It only works and is effective if you allow it to sit UNDER your tongue until it FULLY dissolves. If you swallow, chew, or take with water, it will not work at all (the medication will not help you). You should avoid drinking, eating, or smoking 15 minutes before and after the dose and until it dissolves. \*NOTE: You can take a sip of water to moisten your mouth before you take your dose.

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## Buprenorphine Beginning Treatment

### **DAY 1**

Before taking your first buprenorphine dose you want to feel lousy from your withdrawal symptoms. It should be at least 12 hours since you used heroin or pain pills (OxyContin, Vicodin, etc.) and at least 24 hours since you used methadone. The worse you feel when you begin the medication the better it will make you feel and the more satisfied you will be with the experience.

### **Symptoms**

You should have at least 3 of the following feelings:

- Twitching, tremors, shaking
- Joint and bone aches
- Bad chills or sweating
- Anxious or irritable
- Goose pimples
- Restlessness
- Heavy yawning
- Enlarged pupils
- Stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

**Administration of 1<sup>st</sup> Dose - \*\*\*If you received buprenorphine in the ER, skip to the next page\*\*\***

### **Administration: Hour 1**



#### **1. Place the strip or tablet under your tongue**

Put the 4mg strip or tablet under your tongue and do not swallow it.



#### **2. Keep it there for 15 minutes**

The medicine is absorbed through the skin at the bottom of your tongue and will work over the course of 15 minutes. Do not eat food, or drink liquids at this time.



#### **3. Check in at one hour**

Feel better? Good, the medicine is working. Don't take any more.

Still feel lousy after one hour? Don't worry you will just need more medication. If you still have feelings of withdrawal, put another 4mg strip or tablet under your tongue.

## Administration of 2<sup>nd</sup> Dose

Administration: Hours 6 - 12		3. Go to your follow-up clinic visit
		<p>It is crucial that you follow up at the clinic to start your follow-up care. Take a moment to answer these questions to create a plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What day and time will you go to the clinic?</li> <li>2. What will you be doing immediately before this?</li> <li>3. How will you get to the clinic?</li> </ol>
<p><b>1. Check in at Hours 6-12</b></p> <p>Later in the day (6-12 hours after the first dose), see how you feel again. If you feel fine, don't take any more. If you have withdrawal feelings, take another 4 mg dose under your tongue.</p>	<p><b>2. 12mg limit and withdrawal</b></p> <p>Do not take more than 12 mg on the first day. Most people feel better after 4-12 mg on their first day but if you still feel really bad, like you are having a bad withdrawal, return to the emergency department.</p>	

### DAY 2

The right dose depends on how you felt on day 1. The dose you will take every day after Day 1 is based on your experience on Day 1. The maximum amount for Day 2 should not exceed 16mg.

MORNING		 + 	
	If you took 4 mg on Day 1 and felt fine this morning, take 4mg as your Day 2 dose.	If you took 4 mg on Day 1 and woke up feeling withdrawal symptoms, take 8 mg as your Day 2 dose.	<b>OR</b>
NIGHT		 , maybe + 	
	You may feel fine all day. If you feel withdrawal symptoms at night, take another 4 mg dose.	You may feel fine all day. If you feel withdrawal symptoms at night, take another 4 mg or 8 mg dose.	, maybe +

### FOLLOW-UP

**Getting to the clinic is absolutely critical to make a treatment plan!** Buprenorphine is only part of the treatment for opioid use disorder.

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***Your Clinic Follow-up Appointment Information***

**It is very important for you to follow-up in the Vanderbilt Bridge Clinic. This is a special clinic for treating patients with opioid use disorder.**

**The clinic is located at:**

**The Village at Vanderbilt  
1500 21<sup>st</sup> Ave S  
Suite XXXX (XX floor)  
Nashville, TN 37212  
Phone: (615) XXX - XXXX**

**Your appointment is on: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_**

**at \_\_\_\_\_ A.M. / P.M.**

**If you have any questions before your appointment, please call (615) XXX-XXXX**