Treatment

Opioid addiction is a chronic disease, like heart disease or diabetes. A chronic disease is a medical condition for life. It cannot be cured, but it can be managed. However, a person with addiction can have a healthy, productive life with treatment.

Where can I find a treatment center?

Call SAMHSA's National Helpline – 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
The National Helpline is free and confidential. It is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

The Fast Tracker website is another place to find help.

Are there resources for recovery in my community?

The Recovery Resources section of the website has resources for:

- Aitkin County
- Bois Forte
- Crow Creek
- Lower Brule
- Itasca County
- Mille Lacs
- Pine County
- St. Louis County
- Virtual/online

What should I look for in a treatment program for myself or a loved one?

The Surgeon General’s Office recommends that a treatment program should have:

- Personalized diagnosis, assessment, and treatment planning - one size does not fit all and treatments should be tailored to you and your family.
- Long-term disease management - addiction is a chronic disease of the brain with the potential for both recovery and recurrence. Long-term outpatient care is the key to recovery.
- Access to FDA-approved medications.
- Effective behavioral interventions delivered by trained professionals.
- Coordinated care for other/co-occurring diseases and disorders.
- Recovery support services - such as mutual aid groups, peer support specialists, and community services that can provide continuing emotional and practical support for recovery**.**

What do treatment programs include?

- Medication-assisted treatment (MAT)
- Counseling and behavioral therapies
- Residential and hospital-based treatment

What is medication-assisted treatment (MAT)?

MAT is a treatment for addiction that includes the use of medication along with counseling and behavioral therapy. It is important you work with a healthcare provider to develop the best treatment plan for you.

Which medications are used to treat opioid addiction?

Methadone, buprenorphine and naltrexone are medications approved to treat opioid addiction.

Methadone
Methadone is an opioid. It is provided at a dose that helps stabilize the brain without causing a “high.” It is taken by mouth, usually as a liquid, and is provided through a

specialized treatment center called an “opioid treatment program (OTP).”

Buprenorphine (e.g. Suboxone®)
Buprenorphine has partial activity of an opioid. It is provided at a dose that helps stabilize the brain without causing a “high.” Buprenorphine is usually taken dissolved under the tongue and can be prescribed by a physician, nurse practitioner or physician-assistant who has completed additional training and is “waivered.”

Methadone and **buprenorphine** can decrease withdrawal symptoms and cravings. They work by acting on the same targets in the brain as other opioids, but they do not make you feel high. Some people worry that if they take methadone or buprenorphine, it means that they are substituting one addiction for another. This is *not* true. It’s important to remember these medicines are a treatment. They restore balance to the parts of the brain affected by addiction. This allows your brain to heal while you work toward recovery. Similar to taking medications for other chronic diseases like diabetes or high blood pressure, it is likely these medications will be necessary long-term (can range from years to life-long).

Naltrexone (e.g. Vivitrol®)
Naltrexone blocks the effects of opioids. It is taken when someone has completely stopped opioids to help prevent use. It can be taken by mouth daily or as a monthly injection.

How does counseling treat opioid abuse and addiction?

Counseling for opioid abuse and addiction can help you:

- Change attitudes and behaviors related to drug use.
- Build healthy life skills.
- Stick with other forms of treatment, such as medication-assisted treatment (MAT).
- Get referrals to other resources.

How do behavioral therapies treat opioid abuse and addiction?

Behavioral therapies can help you:

- Modify attitudes and behaviors related to drug use.
- Handle stressful situations and various triggers that might cause another relapse.
- Enhance the effectiveness of medications and help people remain in treatment longer.

Sources

SAMHSA. (2020). *Medication and counseling treatment.*

US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Office of the Surgeon General. (2018). *Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Spotlight on Opioids*.