

Instructions for starting buprenorphine (Suboxone) at home when you are NOT currently using opiates (heroin, pain pills, etc)

It is not safe to mix buprenorphine and benzodiazepines (the class of drugs that includes Valium, Klonopin, Xanax, Ativan, etc). **Please do not start taking buprenorphine if you have used any of these drugs recently, or intend to do so in the future.**

Even if you only occasionally use opiates, if you start buprenorphine while you are high, the buprenorphine will make you sick. Please let your health care provider know how often you use.

Make a plan for starting your buprenorphine. It is best to start in the morning on a day that you are not too busy so that you can keep track of how you feel.

When you decide it is time to start your buprenorphine, here is what you should do:

- Break one 8 mg tablet in half; or cut 8 mg film strip in half.
- Take everything out of your mouth (gum, etc.).
- Sit or stand, but don't lie down.
- Take a sip of water to wet your mouth and tongue, then swallow the water or spit it out.
- Put one half of the buprenorphine tablet/film under your tongue. Do not swallow or suck on it. Even if it does not taste good, it is important that you let it sit under your tongue until it is completely dissolved. Do not swallow your saliva until the pill/film has dissolved completely. Hold your saliva in your mouth for at least one full minute. Any buprenorphine that you swallow (or spit out) will not make you feel better. Don't talk while the pill is dissolving, just sit and wait.

You may start to feel some effect in about 20 minutes although you may not notice any changes right away. Keep track of how you feel over the next hour or two. If you are still feeling some withdrawal or craving, you may take the 2nd half of your tablet or film. For the rest of the first week or two, you will take either ½ tablet/film or 1 whole tablet/film every morning.

You may need to have your dose adjusted over the next few weeks although many people who start buprenorphine when they have not been using regularly do well on a low dose. At your next appointment you can talk with your doctor about how well the dose is working.

Remember that one of the most important parts of recovery from addiction is participating in groups or counseling.

How about going to a recovery group today?