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- MOUD combines medications and behavioral therapy to help treat opioid use disorder. The goal of MOUD is full recovery from OUD.¹⁻⁴
- MOUD is commonly used for the treatment of opioid use disorder, including prescription opioids and heroin.¹⁻⁴
- MOUD may help reduce cravings for opioids and prevent withdrawal symptoms.¹⁻⁴
- Medications are available in a variety of forms. These include tablets, liquids, and injections.¹⁻⁴
- MOUD has been shown to increase an individual's ability to get and keep a job. MOUD may also increase the chances of staying in treatment.¹⁻⁴

What is Opioid Use Disorder (OUD)?

OUD is a chronic and treatable mental health condition that involves the repeated use of opioids that leads to serious impairment or distress. OUD may cause relationship and health problems as well as difficulties at work, school, or home. Symptoms of OUD include not being able to control or reduce opioid use, cravings and use of larger amounts of opioids over time.

What is Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Treatment?¹⁻²

MOUD treatment involves the use of certain medications to help a person with OUD who wants to decrease or stop using opioids. MOUD combines the use of certain medications with behavioral therapies, counseling and social support for the treatment of opioid use disorder. MOUD, combined with counseling and therapy, reduces opioid use and increases the chance of recovering from OUD.

How can MOUD help treat OUDs?³⁻⁴

The medications used to treat opioid use disorder come in a variety of forms, such as tablets, liquids, and injections. Many of these medications help reduce cravings for opioids. Some medications block the “high” caused by opioid usage. Others decrease the effects of physical dependency, such as withdrawal symptoms and cravings.

Examples of MOUDs

There are three medications approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for OUD: methadone, buprenorphine (both buprenorphine and buprenorphine/naloxone), and naltrexone.

Common misunderstandings of MOUD¹⁻⁴

1. MOUD is just a substitute for opioids or alcohol.
 - a. FALSE. People will not experience a “high” from these medications. MOUD are used to treat withdrawal symptoms and help reduce cravings. Some cause unpleasant side effects if taken at the same time as another opioid.
2. MOUD will make an individual less likely to get and keep a job.
 - a. FALSE. When given at the proper dose and taken as prescribed, MOUD does not adversely affect an individual's intelligence, chance of being hired, or physical abilities.
3. MOUD can be used instead of therapy or counseling.
 - a. FALSE. MOUD should be combined with counseling and social support to help increase chances of recovery.

How effective is MOUD?³⁻⁴

The goal of MOUD is full recovery. MOUD, in combination with counseling and therapy, has been shown to:

- Improve how long a person is expected to live
- Increase chances of staying in treatment
- Decrease dangerous over-use of opioids and decrease chances of overdose
- Increase chances to gain and keep a job
- Increase chances of recovering from a OUD

What if I am interested in MOUD?

Talk with your provider about treatment options. MOUD may not be right for every person living with OUD. When talking with your provider, here are some questions to ask:

- How will MOUD help me?
- What symptoms will MOUD help control?
- What side effects may occur?
- What MOUD options are available for me?
- What is the process to start treatment?
- Are there insurance or other cost considerations to think about?



Go online to find more information about MOUD and to view the references for this toolkit.

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