



Accessing Buprenorphine at the Pharmacy:

A Guide for Patients (Suboxone, Subutex, Zubsolv)

HOW TO FILL YOUR BUPRENORPHINE PRESCRIPTION:

Questions to Ask Your Doctor or Provider:

- **Include their cell phone or direct contact information on the prescription itself.** This helps the pharmacist reach them quickly if needed. Also, ask your doctor if they are OK giving you their on-call line or cell phone number to use if you need help getting your medication at the pharmacy.
- **Include a diagnosis code on your prescription.** Pharmacists often need this code to enter a buprenorphine prescription in their system.
- **Include a personal note to the pharmacist,** either on the prescription or in the notes section on the electronic prescription, like: "Thanks for helping our patient access their life-saving treatment! Please reach out if you have any questions."
- **Give you the names of local pharmacies** that should have your medication in stock.
- **Write "OK to fill now/today" on the prescription,** if you are getting a refill that might be earlier than usual.

Questions to Ask Your Pharmacist:

Your pharmacist is a medication expert. Here are some questions you can ask them **before you take your buprenorphine home:**

- How do I take this medication the right way?
- How long should I wait to eat, drink, or use tobacco after taking it?
- What are the side effects and how can I manage them?
- How can I protect my teeth and mouth from potential side effects?
- Are you concerned about this medication interacting with anything else my doctor prescribed?
- When should I ask for a refill?
- Will my medication be in stock when I need it?
- What should I do if there's a problem filling my prescription?
- What should I do if I feel sick, have cravings, or withdrawal symptoms?
- If you feel like your pharmacist isn't able to answer your question, or if you feel like the medication isn't working, try to contact your doctors.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR PHARMACY EXPERIENCE EASIER

- **Be sure to call ahead to check if your prescription is ready.** Pharmacies can be busy and have wait times. Some pharmacies may not have buprenorphine, and calling ahead can save you time and stress.
- If they ask, **let the pharmacy know about your opioid use disorder treatment or diagnosis.** If you're not sure why the pharmacist is asking something, it is OK to ask them to explain.
- **Know your rights.** Only a pharmacist can decide whether to give you your medication. If a technician or other staff member says no or has questions, feel free to ask to speak with the pharmacist. You can also remind them that substance use disorder is a treatable medical condition and a federally protected disability.
- If you feel you are being treated unfairly and need help, **reach out to your doctor.** They may be able to talk to the pharmacy, help you find another pharmacy, or connect you with other resources in your community.

What Else Can My Pharmacy Do for Me?

Pharmacies can do more than just fill your prescriptions.

Your Pharmacist Can:

- Help you figure out if you may need any vaccines, like the flu or COVID shot, and give them to you at the pharmacy.
- Help you purchase naloxone and wound care supplies. Your pharmacist may also know if these are available for free from a program in your area.
- Help you choose the right over-the-counter medications for things like rashes, nausea, constipation, allergies, women's health products, headaches, and pain.
- Help you find a cheaper version of your medication if the one your doctor picked costs too much.
- Tell you if a health problem is serious enough that you should see a doctor.
- Help you with long-term health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, or asthma by checking your blood pressure or blood sugar and giving advice.
- Teach you how and when to take your medication so it works best.
- Help you if you want to stop smoking, lose weight, or reach other health goals.

In Some States, Pharmacists Can Also:

- Prescribe and give birth control:
- Test for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or provide home test kits:
- Test and treat for strep, flu, and COVID:

NOTE: Not all pharmacies offer these services. Ask your pharmacist if these and other services are available and check with your insurance to see what is covered.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find a pharmacy that stocks buprenorphine or report a pharmacy that does not stock buprenorphine



<https://bupe.opioidpolicy.org/>

Recovery Resources for Patients



<https://findtreatment.gov/>

American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists Buprenorphine Fact Sheet



<https://www.nami.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Buprenorphine.pdf>

Patient Advocacy Toolkit from the Legal Action Center



<https://www.lac.org/resource/mat-advocacy-toolkit>

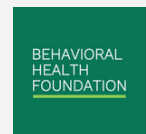
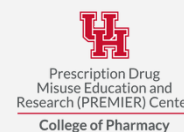
NEED HELP?



CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR



FACES & VOICES
OF RECOVERY
ADVOCATE. ACT. ADVANCE



The University of Texas at Austin
PhARM Program