

Dear Patient,

During your hospitalization, you shared with your physician, nurse, or care team member that you have a strong desire to use opioids and have been unable to stop using them even though you have tried. You were offered a medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and that treatment was initiated to help you recover from your opioid use disorder (OUD).



Patient Education Resource: Recently Hospitalized & Treated for Opioid Use Disorder

What is MOUD?

MOUD includes several medications, like buprenorphine and methadone, that are FDA-approved for the treatment of OUD. When taken regularly, these medications will prevent opioid withdrawal and decrease your cravings for opioids, reducing your risk of returning to opioid use.

Why should I take MOUD?

OUD puts patients at risk for infections, overdose, and death. Regular use of MOUD is associated with a 50% reduction in overdose death. These medications allow you to feel normal, without experiencing episodes of opioid withdrawal, to support your recovery from addiction.

How is MOUD prescribed in the hospital?

Your physician will prescribe buprenorphine or methadone in the hospital to treat both your opioid withdrawal symptoms and your OUD. Your medication dose may be increased or decreased based on your withdrawal symptoms or cravings.

How can I continue MOUD even after I am discharged from the hospital?

If you are interested in continuing buprenorphine after hospitalization, your physician will provide you with a buprenorphine prescription at discharge and will provide you with a referral or an appointment with a buprenorphine provider in your community. If you are interested in continuing methadone after hospitalization, your physician can refer you to a community opioid treatment program for methadone enrollment. In the United States, methadone for OUD can only be dispensed from an opioid treatment program. Your physician will not be able to prescribe you methadone at hospital discharge. It is extremely important that you continue your treatment even after hospitalization to support your long-term recovery. We provided the information below to connect you to an outpatient facility where you may access your medication regularly.

How long will I have to take my medication?

You should take the medication as long as needed to support your recovery from OUD. Many experts recommend remaining on the medication for at least a year to ensure you are stable in your recovery from OUD. Because buprenorphine and methadone are opioids, when you decide to stop these medications, you will need to decrease the dose slowly over time to reduce opioid withdrawal symptoms. You and your doctor will create a plan to ensure this is a smooth process that proceeds at a rate that is comfortable for you in your recovery.

If you have questions about next steps regarding your care plan once you are discharged from the hospital you may call: _____ at _____.