Getting Help for an Opioid Use Disorder

Opioid Use Disorder

Opioid addiction is a brain disease. Opioids- like morphine and heroin- change the way our brain works and the way we think. One of the first brain changes that occurs is that opioids hijack the part of our brain that controls our cravings.

People often start to misuse prescription opioids by taking them:

- more often
- in larger amounts
- for reasons they were not prescribed for

When someone's opioid misuse causes them to have health issues or problems at work, school, or home, they have an opioid use disorder.

Opioid use disorder is a common medical condition that people can recover from.

Getting Help

If you are worried that you or someone you love might have a problem, you are not alone. Fortunately there are many treatment options and people that can help.

1 **Step One:** Make an appointment at your local clinic or IHS facility, because the only person who can diagnose you with having an opioid use disorder is a health care provider.

Research shows that taking medications and seeing a behavioral health counselor at the same time is best for people with opioid use disorder.

2 **Step Two:** Work with your health care provider to determine which treatments are right for you.

Talking with a behavioral health counselor can help you change behaviors related to opioid use.

Taking certain medications can decrease cravings, stop withdrawl symptoms, and help restore balance to your brain and allow it to heal.

3 **Step Three:** Let friends and family know. Recovering from an opioid use disorder can be a life long journey. Walking the road to recovery can be a bumpy path with many ups and downs, but having a strong support system can help.

Tribal Opioid RESPONSE
Healing our Nations Together

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Medications that Help with Opioid Use Disorder

Methadone and buprenorphine decrease craving for opioids. They help restore balance to your brain and allow it to heal. These medicines are safe to take for months, years, or even a lifetime.

Naltrexone works by blocking a high you normally get from taking opioids. It doesn't help with withdrawl symptoms or cravings.

These medicines are safe, effective, and have helped thousands recover.

You and your doctor can decide together if they are right for you.

Medications Myths

Myth #1 *Taking medications, like methadone and buprenorphine, is just trading one addiction for another.*

The truth is that methadone and buprenorphine are opioids, but at the amount prescribed, these medications do not produce a high. They decrease withdrawal symptoms and cravings, which can make it possible for many people with opioid use disorder to function normally and heal.

Myth #2 *Methadone and buprenorphine should only be taken for a short period to help someone detox from opioids.*

The truth is that for many people with opioid use disorder, recovery happens when medication and counseling are used longer-term. The reason is simple: it takes time for people with opioid addiction to make the needed life changes to decrease their risk of relapsing. Plus, it takes time for the brain and nerves to heal. Fortunately, methadone and buprenorphine are both safe to take for a lifetime.

There is Hope

We can heal our communities through educating ourselves and others, supporting each other, and seeking help when we need it.

Text '**OPIOIDS**' to 94449 to receive videos, quizzes, facts, and more to grow your knowledge about opioids.

Visit the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board's website at **www.npaihb.org/opioid** to learn more about treatments, reversing an overdose, and other important topics.