

# MEDICATIONS FOR OPIOID OVERDOSE, WITHDRAWAL, & ADDICTION

Medications for opioid **overdose**, **withdrawal**, and **addiction** are safe, effective, and save lives.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse supports research to develop new medicines and delivery systems to treat opioid use disorder and other substance use disorders, as well as other complications of substance use (including withdrawal and overdose), to help people choose treatments that are right for them.

Medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for opioid addiction, overdose, and withdrawal work in various ways.

- ⊖ **Opioid Receptor Agonist**  
Medications attach to opioid receptors in the brain to block withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
- ⊖ **Opioid Receptor Partial Agonist**  
Medications attach to and partially activate opioid receptors in the brain to ease withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
- ⊖ **Opioid Receptor Antagonist**  
Medications attach to and block activity of opioid receptors in the brain. Antagonist medications that treat substance use disorders do so by preventing euphoric effects (the high) of opioids and alcohol and by reducing cravings. Antagonist medications used to treat opioid overdoses do so by reversing dangerous drug effects like slowing or stopping breathing.
- ⊖ **Adrenergic Receptor Agonist**  
A medication that attaches to and activates adrenergic receptors in the brain and helps alleviate withdrawal symptoms.

## REDUCES OPIOID USE AND CRAVINGS

**Methadone**  
Daily liquid or tablet



⊖

**Naltrexone**  
Monthly injection



⊖

**Buprenorphine**  
Daily tablet  
Weekly or monthly injection



⊖

**Buprenorphine/  
Naloxone**  
Daily film under the tongue or tablet



⊖

## TREATS WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

**Lofexidine**  
As-needed tablet



⊖

## REVERSES OVERDOSE

**Naloxone**  
Emergency nasal spray or injection



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**Nalmefene**  
Emergency nasal spray or injection



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