

Family and Support Information

- 1) **What is an opioid?** Opioids are narcotics which have the potential to be highly addictive. The most common opioids abused are codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, and even heroin.
- 2) **What is Suboxone/Subutex?** It is a long-acting opiate that can be safely used to prevent cravings and withdrawal.
- 3) **Why are opioids used to treat addictions to opioids?** Suboxone/Subutex has a milder opioid effect but a stronger attraction than other opioids to the receptors in the brain. Therefore, it blocks those receptor sites and prevents the effect of any other opiates. Because of its weaker opioid effect, patients are more safely able to wean off of Suboxone/Subutex when the time is right. So for those reasons, it is not just substituting one drug for another.
- 4) **What is the correct dose of Suboxone/Subutex?** This varies from person to person and can range from 2mg to 32mg daily. The proper dose is the dose that successfully prevents cravings and withdrawal symptoms.
- 5) **How is Suboxone/Subutex taken?** Suboxone/Subutex is a sublingual medication; it must be placed under the tongue and allowed to dissolve. It may take up to 10 minutes to dissolve and the patient should not eat, drink, brush teeth, or talk much until it is completely dissolved. If it is swallowed, it is NOT absorbed and will not work.
- 6) **How is Suboxone/Subutex prescribed?** Medication is only prescribed during monthly office visits at our clinic. If a patient misses an appointment (or loses medication), he/she may not be able to refill the medication on time and may risk going into withdrawal. Prescriptions will only be written at office visits and will not be called in after hours or on weekends.
- 7) **How are patients monitored?** Follow-up visits are generally at least every 4 weeks. This is to monitor compliance and ensure patient safety. Additionally, periodic drug screening, pill counts, and DEA database monitoring will be required of the patient. Addiction is like any other chronic disease (like diabetes, high blood pressure, etc..) that requires frequent monitoring and follow-up evaluations.
- 8) **Should a patient seek counseling?** We highly encourage counseling in conjunction with our program because treating the psychological aspect of addiction can be a crucial tool in successful treatment.

Please remember, the family plays an extremely vital role in assisting our patients during treatment. Medication alone can not cure addiction as successful treatment involves both physical and psychological aspects. By having a great support system of family and friends, patients are able to better withstand the ups and downs in the difficult but life-saving journey of kicking drugs to the curb!

Marsh  *MediClinic*