



# Myths About Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for Opioid Use Disorder

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## Are you or someone you love struggling with opioid use disorder?

There is help. It is called **medication-assisted treatment**, or **MAT**. It uses medicines along with counseling and other support to care for addiction. It can save lives, but there are many myths around it.

### **Medicines used for opioid use disorder:**

Buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone are used to help people who are addicted to heroin, morphine, codeine, oxycodone, and hydrocodone.

## Let's debunk some myths about MAT

**Myth 1: "Using medications like methadone or buprenorphine is just replacing one addiction with another."**

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**Fact:** MAT does not swap one addiction for another. It is a proven way to use specific medicines to help with drug addiction. These medicines are methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone. MAT is designed to prevent you from going into withdrawal, imagine a life without the fear of withdrawal.

MAT can help you stop the harmful cycles of drug use and live a better life. When you add in counseling and other types of care, you can get better.

**Myth 2: "MAT should only be used for a short period of time."**

**Fact:** There is no one-size-fits-all timeline for MAT. Some people may need care for months. Others might need it for years or longer. You and your doctor will decide what works best for you.

**Myth 3: “MAT is only for people who have not succeeded at quitting on their own.”**

**Fact:** MAT works for many people, including people who have tried to quit in the past. In fact, research shows that people who get MAT are:

- Less likely to start using again
- More likely to stick with their care program
- Less likely to die from an overdose

**Myth 4: “Taking medicines means I’m not really in recovery.”**

**Fact:** Recovery looks different for everyone. MAT is just one way to get there. And research shows that it works. Taking medicines to quit drugs doesn’t mean you can’t be in recovery. What is important is that you are taking charge of your life.

**Myth 5: “MAT is just a crutch; true recovery means being completely drug-free.”**

**Fact:** Opioid use disorder is a tough medical problem. It needs daily care over a long period of time. For many people, MAT is a critical tool that helps them reach true recovery.

**Myth 6: “MAT raises my chances of overdosing.”**

**Fact:** MAT significantly lowers your chances of overdosing. You are less likely to go back to using drugs and some MAT helps prevent overdosing. With MAT, you don’t have the bad cravings and sickness that can happen with withdrawal. You can focus on getting better.

MAT has been shown to improve physical/mental health, and to lead to a higher quality of life. You won’t have to worry as much about going back to using drugs.

**Myth 7: “I’ll be judged or shamed for using MAT.”**

**Fact:** MAT has been proven to work. Don’t let people try to use shame to keep you from taking care of yourself. Know that you are taking the right steps for your health. You can find the experts and community to support you.

**Myth 8: “MAT will make me feel sick and go into withdrawal.”**

**Fact:** MAT is designed so that you don’t feel the worst of withdrawal. And you will work with a doctor who knows how to use MAT so that it works right for you.

You might feel some slight discomfort when you get started. But that should go away as your body adjusts. Once you are fully in treatment, you will no longer feel withdrawal symptoms. There are also new ways to get started with MAT that can substantially reduce or completely avoid the potential for withdrawal. Most importantly, with MAT you don’t have the highs and lows that opioids can cause.

## Don’t let myths keep you from the care you deserve.

**Take charge of your recovery:** MAT is proven to help people with opioid use disorder lead healthier, more stable lives. If you or someone you know is thinking about trying MAT, talk to a doctor or nurse. They can help you understand your choices and make a plan that works for you.

### Need help or more information on your recovery treatment options?



**MetroPlusHealth Virtual Visit |  
NYC Health + Hospitals  
ExpressCare**

**855.298.3508**

Calls taken 24 hours a day at  
no cost to you



**Oupatient Detox Services**

Bellevue

**212.562.5591**

Mon – Fri, 8am – 4pm, Walk-in

Jacobi

**718.918.4465**

Mon – Fri, 8am – 2pm, Walk-in

Kings County

**718.616.6020**

Mon – Fri, 8am – 2pm, Walk-in

### References:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders/medications-counseling-related-conditions#medications-used-in-mat>

<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma18-5054.pdf>

<https://oasas.ny.gov/opioid-use-disorder>