

Medication-Assisted Treatment

“Ultimately, it’s clear there [is] an urgent need to ensure access to, and wider use and understanding of, approved treatments [for opioid use disorder].”

- Scott Gottlieb, M.D., Commissioner of Food and Drugs ([April 20, 2018](#))

What is MAT?

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT)¹ is an evidence-based method that combines behavioral therapies and medications approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat opioid use disorder (OUD), alcohol use disorder, or nicotine use disorder.

There are three FDA-Approved medications for the treatment of OUD: buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone.

Addiction treatment experts consider MAT to be the gold standard of care for the treatment of OUD.

How MAT for OUD Works

Long-lasting changes in brain chemistry can make it difficult for people with OUD to abstain from using opioids because physical withdrawal symptoms and cravings can be overwhelming.

MAT can help reduce the symptoms of opioid withdrawal and curb opioid cravings that can lead to relapse.

¹ While Medication-Assisted Treatment is the widely-used term for this type of treatment, CUSP supports the use of the term “medication for addiction treatment” as a more accurate description of this form of treatment for OUD.

What the Evidence Shows

- Evidence shows that MAT is effective in treating OUD and reducing drug-related disease and criminal recidivism, and more effective than either behavioral interventions or medication alone in treating OUD.
- According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), individuals receiving MAT as part of their OUD treatment are 75 percent less likely to die from a drug overdose than those not receiving MAT.
- Facilitating patient access to MAT when medically appropriate can reduce overdose deaths.

To learn more about MAT, read our fact sheet on Multiple OUD Treatment Options.