

Other notes about taking naltrexone

- Naltrexone is more effective when used in combination with a package of support and counselling.
- There is a high risk of overdose if you stop taking naltrexone and start using heroin again.
- Naltrexone will block the effects of opioid-based analgesia.
- Carry your naltrexone card with you and inform any health professional caring for you that you take naltrexone.
- You should refrain from drinking alcohol or using drugs during your treatment.
- Any attempt to overcome the blockade of opioid receptors by overdosing could result in acute opioid intoxication.
- All drugs must be kept out of reach of children and animals. Please ask your worker for a lockable box to store your medication (free of charge). Children should never be given your medication. They have no tolerance and it could kill them. Always call 999 if you think a child has swallowed your medication. Talk to your Health Visitor or GP if your child has difficulty sleeping or being soothed.
- Read the information leaflet which will be given with your medication.



About Change Grow Live

Change Grow Live is a social care and health charity that works with individuals who want to change their lives for the better and achieve positive and life-affirming goals.

Find out more

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Your Questions Answered

Naltrexone

www.changegrowlive.org



What is naltrexone?

Naltrexone is a medication which blocks the effects of opioids and is used to prevent relapse for people who have already detoxed from opioid drugs. It is also used in the treatment of alcohol dependence to support abstinence. Naltrexone also works by balancing the levels of various naturally occurring chemicals in the brain, which have been disturbed by the heavy use of alcohol and opioid drugs.

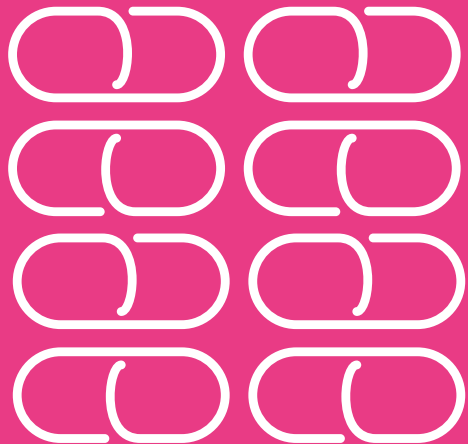


Our mission is to help people change the direction of their lives, grow as a person and live life to its full potential.

Who prescribes naltrexone and when?

You will be offered a full health and wellbeing assessment with a recovery worker and a prescribing member of the clinical team. Following this assessment you may be prescribed naltrexone. You will need to have a blood test to check how your liver is working and a urine screen or other test to show you are free of opioids before naltrexone is prescribed.

Ongoing prescribing of naltrexone will be under specialist supervision, either from your local service or a GP specialised in substance use.



Why choose naltrexone?

Naltrexone can help you if you have detoxed from opiates and feel you may be at risk of relapse.

Naltrexone should be considered if you are motivated to sustain abstinence as part of a relapse prevention package.

Naltrexone can help you if you are suffering with cravings after stopping alcohol use, which may continue for many months. The experience of cravings may trigger relapse to alcohol use. Naltrexone has been shown to reduce the likelihood of relapse to alcohol use.

Taking naltrexone

Naltrexone is available as a 50mg tablet which is swallowed with water. The starting dose is usually 25mg initially, followed by 50mg daily thereafter.

Treatment in opioid dependence starts after the appropriate wash-out period for the particular opioid.

You will need to be opiate-free for at least 3 – 4 days after buprenorphine, 7 days after heroin or 14 days after methadone; you will be required to provide an opiate negative urine screen just before commencing naltrexone treatment.

Naltrexone should be stopped if being used in alcohol addiction and drinking persists 4 – 6 weeks after starting treatment.

How long will it take to work?

Naltrexone has an effect within minutes of being taken, and therefore can result in opioid withdrawal symptoms if you are not opioid free. It reaches its peak level in the body after 1 hour. The effects can last for up to 48 hours.

There is no standard treatment length recommended and this depends on your individual needs, however treatment should be for at least 3 months for both opioid and alcohol dependence.

