



Prevention Education Treatment Recovery Assistance

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

In 2018, it was estimated that 2 million Americans had an Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). **Just as with any other serious, chronic disease, Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) are manageable with the proper treatments and supports. Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) is one of those supports.** MAT has been proven to be one of the most effective evidence-based treatments for OUD. Studies have shown that people receiving medications as a part of their treatment are 75% less likely to die due to SUD than those not receiving medication.

The three medications commonly used, Methadone, Naltrexone, and Buprenorphine, serve to eliminate cravings, decrease the euphoric feelings of opioids, and decrease withdrawal symptoms. Because of this, **when coupled with behavioral health therapy, MAT is just one part of a whole-patient approach to treatment.**

THE MYTHS OF MAT

MYTH: MAT is replacing one drug with another.

FACT: A medication-first approach offers the stabilization needed to continue taking steps forward in the recovery process. **By reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms, and by blocking the effects of opioids, MAT is one component of a multi-faceted treatment plan.** Similarly to when someone with hypertension is provided medication and a list of behavioral changes to improve their health, MAT is one treatment in a list of several solutions toward better health.

MYTH: SUD treatment should be abstinence-based.

FACT: Strong cravings for drugs and alcohol can persist for years after last use. Relapses and overdose deaths are common among people in recovery. MAT can serve to reduce cravings and minimize the desired effect of substance use. **A 2014 study by SAMHSA found that medication was used in nearly 80% of detoxifications.**

MYTH: MAT increases overdose risk.

FACT: MAT, in combination with behavioral health therapy, is one of the most effective treatment plans for Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). A study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) showed that in **using MAT, deaths from overdose decreased by 38% in those prescribed buprenorphine and 59% in those prescribed methadone.**

MYTH: MAT is a short-term treatment option.

FACT: Research has shown that **individuals on MAT for at least 1-2 years have the highest rate of long-term success.** This allows people to follow a slow taper schedule free of the stressors that generally come with detoxification without help from medication.

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