Substance Use Disorders Identification Tip Sheet

Screening
The best clinical settings for early screening, detection and intervention of substance use disorders are primary care offices, trauma centers, and emergency rooms. Members with positive screens obtained through any of the methods discussed below require further evaluation. For the initial screening, the primary care or other clinician can utilize tools and techniques discussed below.

- **Administer a substance use screening tool**, such as the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT), AUDIT-C (Consumption) or the CAGE-AID. The first three questions of the AUDIT can be used alone to detect up to 80 percent of patients with mild to moderate alcohol use problems. The AUDIT-C, a three-item modified version of the AUDIT instrument, screens for frequency of alcohol consumption, quantity of alcohol consumption, and the quantity of alcohol consumption on a single occurrence. The four-item CAGE alcohol use questionnaire is the most popular screening test used in primary care. The CAGE-AID expands the focus of each item of the CAGE to include both alcohol and other drugs and identifies severe alcohol and drug use problems, including dependence. (AUDIT and CAGE are available at [http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa65/AA65.htm](http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa65/AA65.htm).)

- **Administer a single-question screen**: “How many times in the past year have you consumed five or more drinks in a day (for men) and four or more drinks in a day (for women)?” or “How many times in the past year have you used an illegal drug or used a prescription medication for nonmedical reasons?” Single-screening questions, as well as longer screening tools, can identify substance dependence and are useful in primary care settings. A recent study found that 88 percent of those with alcohol dependence and 97 percent of those with drug dependence were identified by the single-screening question.

- **Look for warning signs suggesting substance use disorders**, including repeated complaints of physical discomfort, elevated vital signs, frequent accidents, sleep disturbances, fatigue and unintentional weight loss.

- **Assessing adolescents**: Signs of substance use disorders in adolescents may include involvement in the juvenile justice system, truancy or poor grades, diminished interests in hobbies or sports, irritability, lying, carelessness about appearance, family conflict, injuries requiring emergency room visits, etc. When alcohol use is a problem in adolescents, illegal drug use is more likely also to be a problem. The CRAFFT test was developed specifically for screening adolescents.

- **Assessing older adults**: Substance use disorders in older adults are under-diagnosed. Approximately one in three older adults who abuse alcohol developed the problem after age 60. Older adults require less alcohol to become intoxicated, and hide problematic alcohol use due to lower demands for social and occupational functioning.

Treatment
- A systematic review and meta-analysis for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force found that behavioral counseling interventions improve alcohol consumption with brief multicontact interventions (i.e., 10-15 minute per contact) delivered by a primary care provider, a nurse or health educator. In another study, a single discussion on the risks of alcohol abuse, goal setting for cutting back, and one follow-up discussion reduced alcohol consumption by 30 percent and occasions of binge-drinking over a 12-month period.

- Pharmacotherapy interventions can be helpful during all phases of treatment (see Table). Medications are best used in combination with psychotherapy or counseling interventions. Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) has been shown to be effective in the treatment of alcohol dependence with Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved drugs (e.g., disulfiram, naltrexone, acamprosate) and treatment of opioid dependence with methadone, naltrexone, buprenorphine-naloxone, and naloxone hydrochloride injection (for emergency treatment of overdose).

- For adolescents and patients on methadone maintenance, family therapy has demonstrated effectiveness.

- Psychosocial treatment emphasizing social support is effective for older adults at risk of relapse due to loneliness and social isolation.

- Self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous ([www.alcoholics-anonymous.org](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org)), Narcotics Anonymous ([www.na.org](http://www.na.org)) and Al-anon ([www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)) can be helpful.

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References


## Pharmacotherapy for Substance Use Disorders

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| **Disulfiram** (Antabuse)                 | Helps prevent relapse of alcohol abuse. Administer only after abstained from alcohol for 12 hours. Ingested in combination with alcohol, it causes nausea, vomiting, headache and flushing. | **Induction**: 250-500 mg daily for 2 weeks.  
**Maintenance**: 250 mg daily. Range is 125-500 mg daily.  
**Labs**: liver function tests (LFT) initially, then at 10-14 days, every six months thereafter. | Useful in patients with a history of relapse, current motivation, and a witnessed ingestion program. | Metallic after-taste, seizures, dermatitis; severe reaction or death could result from alcohol ingestion. |
| **Naltrexone** (Revia)                    | Helps with alcohol cravings, possibly by reducing the reinforcing effects of alcohol. Also used to block the effects of opiates. | **Induction for opioid dependence**: Be sure patient is opioid-free for 7-10 days; confirm by urine drug screen (UDS). Start 25 mg. If no withdrawal reaction, increase by another 25 mg. Continue at 50 mg daily.  
**Induction for alcohol dependence**: Start at 50 mg daily. Continue at 50 mg daily up to 12 weeks. | Very useful in the acute recovery phase of alcohol dependence (first 12 weeks). | Nausea, abdominal pain, constipation, dizziness, headache, anxiety, fatigue. |
| **Vivitrol™** (naltrexone for extended-release injectable suspension) | Treatment of alcohol dependence in patients who are able to abstain from alcohol in an outpatient setting prior to initiation of treatment with Vivitrol. Prevention of relapse following opioid detoxification. | **380 mg delivered as an intramuscular gluteal injection every 4 weeks; alternating buttocks for each subsequent injection. Product has to be refrigerated.**  
**Alcohol Dependence**: Be sure patient is alcohol-free for at least a week.  
**Opioid Dependence**: Be sure patient is opioid-free for 7-10 days prior to administering.  
**Labs**: UDS, LFTs prior to induction and every six months thereafter. | Vivitrol™ may be easier for patients recovering from alcohol dependence to use consistently. The once-monthly formulation addresses the critical problem of adherence in the opioid addicted population. Also addresses problems encountered with substitution therapy — i.e., access, acceptability, diversion, illicit use and overdose deaths. | Vivitrol™ should not be used by a patient who is using opioids such as heroin or opioid analgesics to avoid precipitation of opioid withdrawal that may be severe enough to require hospitalization.  
Patients may experience injection site reactions.  
Cases of hepatotoxicity and clinically significant liver dysfunction were observed in patients taking Vivitrol. |
<p>| <strong>Naloxone hydrochloride injection</strong> (Evzio) | To reverse opioid overdose; an emergency treatment. | Pre-filled auto-injector with 0.4 mg/0.4 ml naloxone hydrochloride solution; administer into the anterolateral aspect of the thigh, through clothing if necessary (intra-muscular or subcutaneous use only); call 911 - emergency medical services (EMS) prior to or at time of injection as emergency medical care is needed immediately after use; additional doses every 2-3 minutes while awaiting medical assistance. | For emergency treatment of opioid overdose; it rapidly delivers a dose for treatment of manifestations of overdose: respiratory and/or central nervous system depression. | Acute withdrawal syndrome may result when abrupt /complete reversal of opioid effects, especially in newborns of mothers physically dependent on opioids. |</p>
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<td><strong>Naloxone hydrochloride nasal spray</strong> (Narcan nasal spray)</td>
<td>To temporarily stop or reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.</td>
<td><strong>Administering</strong> a single spray into one nostril; administer additional doses of nasal spray using new nasal spray with each dose if no response or relapse into respiratory depression; additional doses may be administered every 2-3 minutes until arrival of emergency medical assistance.</td>
<td>User-friendly, needle-free; can be administered by first responders, family members, caregivers.</td>
<td>Sudden opioid withdrawal symptoms, e.g., body aches, diarrhea, increased heart rate, fever.</td>
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<td><strong>Acamprosate</strong> (Campral)</td>
<td>Helps with alcohol cravings, possibly by reducing intensity of prolonged withdrawal syndrome. Benefit emerges after 30 to 90 days.</td>
<td><strong>Induction:</strong> Begin two 333 mg tablets, tid. Patients with renal impairment may need dosage reduction. <strong>Maintenance:</strong> 333 mg, tid. <strong>Labs:</strong> blood urea nitrogen (BUN), creatinine, creatinine-clearance.</td>
<td>Reasonably safe in patients with mild to moderate hepatic impairment (excreted via the kidneys).</td>
<td>Diarrhea and increased libido.</td>
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<td><strong>Topiramate</strong> (Topamax)</td>
<td>Helps patients reduce drinking, avoid relapse to heavy drinking, achieve and maintain abstinence, or gain a combination of these effects. (Note: the FDA has not approved the drug for this indication.)</td>
<td><strong>Induction:</strong> Initial dose 25 mg at bedtime. Increase dose by 25-50 mg daily each week, divided into morning and evening doses. <strong>Maintenance:</strong> Target dose is 200 mg per day total, but patients unable to tolerate that dose may respond to lower doses. <strong>Labs:</strong> Monitor renal function, serum electrolytes and bicarbonate.</td>
<td>Can be used in patients who are still drinking.</td>
<td>Paresthesias; taste perversion; anorexia and weight loss; somnolence; cognitive dysfunction.</td>
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<td><strong>Baclofen</strong> (Lioresal, Kemstro)</td>
<td>Baclofen has shown promise in initial clinical trials for treating severe alcohol dependence. Baclofen is administered to patients who have already become abstinent. There is also some empirical evidence that baclofen is comparable to diazepam in reducing uncomplicated alcohol withdrawal symptoms.</td>
<td><strong>Induction:</strong> Begin 5 mg tid for the first three days and then to a ceiling dosage of 10 mg tid. <strong>Maintenance:</strong> Continue 10 mg tid. <strong>Labs:</strong> aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alkaline phosphatase or glucose levels for patients with liver diseases or diabetes mellitus.</td>
<td>Particularly well suited for patients with liver impairment as it is excreted primarily through the kidney.</td>
<td>Common adverse side effects: headaches, insomnia, nausea, hypotension, urinary frequency. Rare side effects include visual abnormalities and excitement.</td>
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<td><strong>Buprenorphine Hydrochloride</strong> (Subutex)</td>
<td>Can be used for office-based detoxification from opiates and maintenance treatment for opiate dependency by specially trained and registered physicians. Preferred for use ONLY during induction since it does not contain naloxone. The use of Subutex for unsupervised administration should be limited to those patients who cannot tolerate Suboxone.</td>
<td><strong>Induction:</strong> Day 1, 8 mg sublingual tablet daily. Day 2, 16 mg sublingual tablet daily. From Day 3 onward, patients should receive either Suboxone sublingual tablet or subutex at the same buprenorphine dose as Day 2. <strong>Maintenance:</strong> 16 mg sublingual tablet daily. Range is 4-24 mg daily. <strong>Labs:</strong> UDS at induction, and monthly thereafter. LFTs on induction, every six months thereafter.</td>
<td>Preferred over combination buprenorphine/naloxone products for treatment of opioid dependence in pregnant women. Sublingual tablet. Buprenorphine can prevent symptoms of withdrawal in patients addicted to opiates.</td>
<td>Headache, nausea, vomiting, hyperhidrosis, constipation, signs and symptoms of withdrawal, insomnia, and pain.</td>
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| Buprenorphine Hydrochloride and Naloxone Hydrochloride (Suboxone) | Treatment of opioid dependence. | **Induction:** Day 1, administer up to 8 mg/2 mg Suboxone (in divided doses). On day 2, administer up to 16 mg/4 mg of Suboxone as a single dose.  
**Maintenance:** Recommended target dose is 16 mg/4 mg in single dose. Range can be between 4 mg/1 mg and 24 mg/6 mg daily. Doses over 24 mg/6 mg have not been demonstrated to provide a clinical advantage.  
**Labs:** UDS at induction, and monthly thereafter. LFTs on induction, every six months thereafter.  
**Buccal or Sublingual Administration:** Place one film under the tongue, close to the base on the left or right side, and allow to completely dissolve OR place on film on the inside of the left or right cheek and allow to completely dissolve.  
Can only be prescribed by prescribers who are certified under the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 and who have been assigned a unique identification number ("X" number). | Sublingual film.  
Alternative maintenance treatment to methadone.  
Allows home based treatment. | Oral hypoesthesia, glossodynia, oral mucosal erythema, headache, nausea, vomiting, hyperhidrosis, constipation, signs and symptoms of withdrawal, insomnia, pain, and peripheral edema. |
| Buprenorphine Hydrochloride and Naloxone Hydrochloride (Bunavail) | Maintenance treatment of opioid dependence. | **Maintenance:** Recommended target dose of 8.4 mg/1.4 mg as a single daily dose. Range of 2.1 mg/0.2 mg to 12.6 mg/2.1 mg per day. Dosages higher than this have not been demonstrated to provide any clinical advantage.  
**Bunavail:** 4.2 mg/0.7 mg is equal to Suboxone 8 mg/2 mg.  
Should be used in patients who have been initially inducted using buprenorphine sublingual tablets.  
**Labs:** UDS at induction, and monthly thereafter. LFTs on induction, every six months thereafter.  
**Administration:** Use the tongue to wet the inside of the cheek or rinse the mouth with Buccal film.  
Alternative maintenance treatment to methadone.  
Allows home based treatment. | Headache, nausea, vomiting, hyperhidrosis, constipation, signs and symptoms of withdrawal, insomnia, and pain.  
NOT for induction. |
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<td>Buprenorphine Hydrochloride and Naloxone Hydrochloride (Zubsolv)</td>
<td>Treatment of opioid dependence.</td>
<td><strong>Induction</strong>: For patients dependent on short-acting opioid products who are in moderate opioid withdrawal; on Day 1, administer up to 5.7 mg/1.4 mg of Zubsolv sublingual tablet (in divided doses). On Day 2, administer a single daily dose of up to a total dose of 11.4 mg/2.9 mg of Zubsolv sublingual tablet. <strong>Maintenance</strong>: Target dose is 11.4 mg/2.9 mg daily. Range is between 2.9 mg/0.71 mg and 17.2 mg/4.2 mg daily. Doses higher than this have not been demonstrated to provide any clinical advantage. Zubsolv 5.7 mg/2.4 mg is equal to Suboxone 8 mg/2 mg. <strong>Labs</strong>: UDS at induction, and monthly thereafter. LFTs on induction, every six months thereafter. <strong>Administration</strong>: Place under the tongue until it dissolves. When taking multiple tablets, place all tablets in different places under the tongue at the same time.</td>
<td>Sublingual tablet. Alternative maintenance treatment to methadone. Allows home based treatment. Some patients have reported this product has a better taste than Suboxone tablets.</td>
<td>Headache, nausea, vomiting, hyperhidrosis, constipation, signs and symptoms of withdrawal, insomnia, pain, and peripheral edema.</td>
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<td>Buprenorphine Implant (Probuphine)</td>
<td>Maintenance treatment of opioid dependence in patients who have achieved and sustained prolonged clinical stability on low to moderate doses of transmucosal buprenorphine-containing products (i.e., doses of no more than 8 mg per day of Subutex or Suboxone sublingual tablet or generic equivalent).</td>
<td>Can only be prescribed by prescribers who are certified under the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 and who have been assigned a unique identification number (“X” number). Each dose consists of four Probuphine implants inserted subdermally in the inner side of the upper arm (74.2 mg ob buprenorphine). The implants are intended to be in place for 6 months of treatment. After the first 6 months, if continued treatment is needed, the new implant must be administered in the inner side of the upper arm that was not used previously. After one insertion in each arm, if a patient is still in need of buprenorphine maintenance, they should be transitioned back to a transmucosal buprenorphine-containing product. There is no experience with inserting additional implants into other sites outside of the upper arm, nor re-insertion into previously used administration sites. Only available through a REMS program. All healthcare providers who intend to prescribe this product must successfully complete a live training program. <strong>Labs:</strong> LFTs on induction</td>
<td>Duration – 6 months.</td>
<td>Insertion/removal complications. Implanta site pain, itching, erythema, headache, depression, constipation, nausea, vomiting, back pain, toothache.</td>
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*These guidelines are not intended to replace a practitioner’s clinical judgment. They are designed to provide information and to assist practitioners with decisions regarding care. The guidelines are not intended to define a standard of care or exclusive course of treatment. Health care practitioners using these guidelines are responsible for considering their patients’ particular situation in evaluating the appropriateness of these guidelines. This information is not a statement of benefits. Benefits may vary and individual coverage will need to be verified by the Plan.*