

ALBERTA WIDE, VIRTUAL OPIOID DEPENDENCY PROGRAM (VODP)

7 DAYS PER WEEK: **8AM - 8PM** EMERGENCY PHYSICIAN AFTER
HOURS ACCESS (PHARMACY OR CLIENT CALLS): 403-783-7770

TOLL FREE:1-844-383-7688

FAX:403-783-7610

CLINIC INFORMATION:



SUBLOCADE®

for the treatment of
opioid use disorder



Date: 03/18/2026



WHO IS SUBLOCADE® FOR?

Sublocade® (buprenorphine extended-release) is a medication that doctors prescribe to individuals who are seeking help for their opioid use, which includes drugs like fentanyl, morphine, and hydromorphone. It helps individuals stop using opioids and also alleviates the uncomfortable physical symptoms that occur when they stop taking opioids after long-term use. Additionally, Sublocade® helps to reduce the strong urge to use opioids again.

WHAT IS SUBLOCADE®?

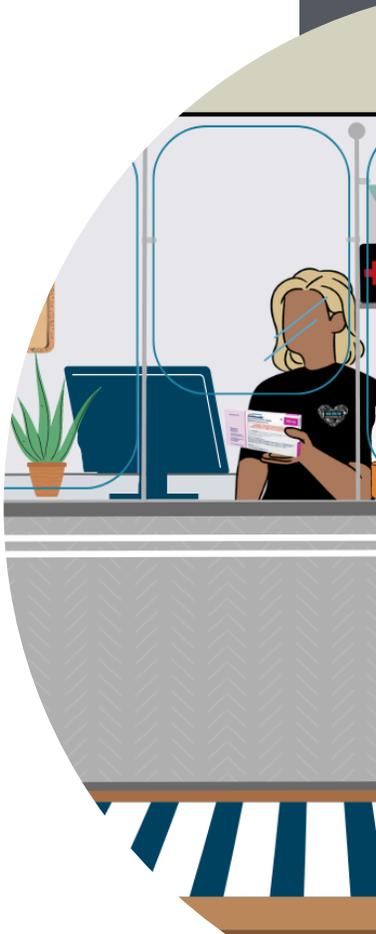
Sublocade® is a monthly injection of buprenorphine. Unlike Suboxone®, it does not contain naloxone. Once injected, the liquid buprenorphine turns into a solid gel, called a depot. The depot gradually releases buprenorphine at a steady rate throughout the month.

WHEN DO DOCTORS RECOMMEND SUBLOCADE®?

Sublocade® is the preferred medication for treating opioid use. Sublocade® works differently than some other drugs like methadone or fentanyl. It's a partial opioid agonist. This means it doesn't fully turn on the opioid receptors in your brain. Receptors can be thought of as locks, and opioids as keys. Sublocade® is like a key that only partly works, so it doesn't unlock all the effects that drugs like fentanyl might.

Sublocade® has a superior safety profile due to its ceiling effect for respiratory depression, as well as fewer side effects and medication interactions.

Sublocade® is a good option for those who do not want to visit a pharmacy daily, dislike the taste of Suboxone®, or feel dopesick before receiving their daily dose of other opioid agonist treatment. Additionally, Sublocade® may lower your risk of an opioid poisoning. However, it's important to discuss your specific risks with your doctor.



HOW DO I START SUBLOCADE®?

Before starting Sublocade®, doctors will give you Suboxone® to see how well you can handle it and to check for any side effects. The length of time you take Suboxone® can be different for everyone, lasting anywhere from 1 hour to 7 days.

Before taking the first dose of Suboxone®, it's crucial to stop using opioids for at least 12-48 hours and be in a state of opioid withdrawal (feeling 'dopesick'). If you don't wait 12-48 hours, taking Suboxone® can worsen withdrawal symptoms (precipitated withdrawal).

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO TAKE SUBLOCADE®?

- A doctor or nurse will give you Sublocade® as an injection in your abdomen every 4 weeks.
- The injection may be uncomfortable, some people describe a hot or burning feeling when the medication is injected. Using an ice pack on the area before and after the injection usually helps to make it less painful.
- After the injection, the medication forms a small bump under the skin, which can last from four weeks to a few months, but it will slowly go away.
- After getting the injection, most people feel fine, but some may feel a bit sleepy for a few days. Over the month, most people feel stable and don't notice any withdrawal symptoms. If you do notice withdrawal symptoms, tell your doctor or nurse.

ARE THERE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH SUBLOCADE®?

Sublocade® should not be taken with alcohol, benzodiazepine medications, or other sedatives. Mixing these substances can make you very sleepy and slow down your breathing to dangerous levels. This can lead to a poisoning, which needs urgent medical help and can even be deadly.

SIDE EFFECTS OF SUBLOCADE®

While the medication is generally well tolerated, side effects are possible. Common side effects include constipation, burning sensation, skin hardening, or redness at the injection site, dizziness, water retention, and drowsiness.