



The College of
Physicians and Surgeons
of Newfoundland and Labrador

Practice Guideline: Suboxone® for Opioid Dependence

Practice Guidelines are recommendations developed by the College with which members should be familiar and follow whenever and wherever possible and appropriate.

Suboxone® (Buprenorphine/Naloxone) for Opioid Dependence

Preamble

Suboxone® (Buprenorphine/Naloxone) has been available for the treatment of opioid dependence in Canada since 2007. The College expects that all physicians who prescribe Suboxone® will have the requisite knowledge about its intended impacts, side effects and role in addiction treatment.

Practice Guidelines

Physicians who prescribe Suboxone® must have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and judgment to do so.

Before prescribing Suboxone®, the following are strongly recommended:

1. Complete the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) Opioid Dependence Core Course (or equivalent program acceptable to the College).
2. Complete a recognized educational program on prescribing Suboxone® (such as the CAMH Buprenorphine-Assisted Opioid Dependence Treatment course or www.suboxonecme.ca).
3. Physicians are advised to consult more experienced prescribers of Suboxone®, when necessary, to enhance their knowledge and ensure patient safety during induction or re-induction after missed doses.
4. Undertake ongoing continuing medical education in opioid-dependency treatment and/or addiction medicine.
5. Review a patient's current medication profile through the Pharmacy Network (e.g. access through Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information HEALTHe viewer, or via pharmacist communication).

6. Be familiar with the College's Methadone Maintenance Treatment Standards and Guidelines.
7. Document discussion with patients on the availability and benefits of addictions services and counselling.

Physicians who prescribe Suboxone® are reminded that they must ensure compliance with all relevant College Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines.

Acknowledgements/References

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (2016). Suboxone Prescribing.
 College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Frequently Asked Questions about Prescribing Buprenorphine.
 College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia. Suboxone

Document History

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