

What to know about the buprenorphine “bupe” shot

Bupe shot basics

- **Injection Schedule:** You can choose to get the shot every week or every month.
- **Getting the Shot:** A doctor will give you the shot in your arm, stomach, legs, or hips. It might make a small bump. It starts working within 24 hours.
- **Bupe dose:** The dose in the shot will be at least as strong as the dose in the strips, if not stronger.
- **Slow Release:** Bupe is let out slowly over a week or a month.
- **How it helps:** The shot stops you from feeling sick, helps you want opioids less, and blocks other opioids for a week or a month.

Why it might be a good fit:

- **No Daily Medication:** If you don't want to take a medication every day, the bupe shot could be a good option.
- **Less to worry about:** You don't have to worry about keeping medication safe.
- **Trouble getting on bupe strips:** If you've had trouble getting on bupe strips before, the bupe shot may be easier.
- **Ready to Stop bupe:** If you're ready to stop buprenorphine treatment, this might help.

Am I going to be in withdrawal?

- **Switching from bupe strips:** You probably won't experience withdrawal
- **Not on bupe strips:** You may have some withdrawal symptoms during the first 24 hours after the shot. Your doctor will give you medications to help.
- **Stopping bupe:** Most people do not experience withdrawal when they stop the bupe shot

Possible side effects:

- **Common Side Effects:** Mainly pain, redness, or itching at the injection site. Fatigue after the first injection.
- **Other Side Effects:** Headache, constipation, nausea, like with the bupe strips.
- **Long-term Side Effects:** There aren't any known long-term side effects with the bupe shot.

Interactions:

- **With other medications:** The bupe shot will not interact with most medications you might be taking for mental health, HIV, blood pressure, or others.
- **With other opioids:** The bupe shot blocks other opioids. If you're in pain, let your doctors know you are on the bupe shot so they can find the right dose of pain medicine for you.
- **With other substances:** The bupe shot will not interact with any other non-opioid substances you're using.

Questions you might have:

- **Having an opioid blocker for a long time:** Talk to your doctor if you're worried about having an opioid blocker in your body for a week or month.
- **Being Pregnant:** We don't know much about the bupe shot during pregnancy. Ask your doctor about what's safe. It will not stop you from getting pregnant.

The bupe shot: what you need to know

1 Why get the bupe shot?

- You don't want to take a daily medication
- You don't want to worry about keeping medication safe
- You want to have less withdrawal starting and stopping bupe
- You want to have a steady amount of bupe in your body

4 Other side effects

- Tiredness for first 1-2 days after injection
- Headache
- Trouble sleeping
- Otherwise, similar to bupe strips (upset stomach, constipation, etc.)

2 Bupe shot basics

- There are weekly and monthly shots.
- If you are starting bupe for the first time, you will usually get a weekly shot first.
- Bupe is released slowly in you body over a week or month

5 What if I have withdrawal? symptoms

- Your doctor may prescribe you medications for pain, nausea, diarrhea, and anxiety
- Take your sublingual bupe (wait at least 24 hours after injection)
- Call the clinic to get your next injection early

3 Injection site expectations

- The shot will leave a small bump under your skin. Avoid rubbing the bump.
- You may develop some redness, pain or itching at the injection site
- You can use Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen (Motrin®) and apply ice
- If it does not improve within 24 hours, call your doctor

6 How can I learn more?

- Talk to your healthcare provider