

Information for Treatment Providers: FDA Warns About Dental Problems with Buprenorphine Medicines Dissolved in the Mouth to Treat Opioid Use Disorder and Pain

In January of 2022, the FDA warned that using buprenorphine can cause [dental problems](#) (see QR code below for link to full report). This warning is for buprenorphine oral tablets and medicated strips placed under the tongue or on the inside of the cheek. As stated by the FDA, “Despite these risks, buprenorphine is an important treatment option for opioid use disorder (OUD) and pain, and the benefits of these medicines clearly outweigh the risks”. The FDA recommends that patients using buprenorphine medicines dissolved in the mouth should take extra steps to help lessen the risk of serious dental problems.



How Can You Help?

The FDA recommends that health care providers ask patients about their oral health history prior to prescribing treatment with transmucosal buprenorphine medicine. As serious dental problems have been reported even in patients with no history of dental issues, the FDA recommends referring them to a dentist as soon as possible after starting transmucosal buprenorphine. See resources below to help connect your patient with a dental provider.

The FDA also recommends counseling patients about the potential for dental problems and the importance of taking extra steps after the medicine has completely dissolved (15-30 minutes), including to gently rinse their teeth and gums with water and then swallow. Patients should be advised to wait at least 1 hour before brushing their teeth. The Vermont Department of Health has developed a dental handout for people receiving medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) that you can use with patients to help reinforce these messages.

Dental Benefits and Finding a Dentist in Vermont:

People insured by Medicaid: in Vermont, Medicaid insurance includes dental benefits for both adults and children. Pregnant people have expanded dental benefits. Use the QR code or [this link](#) for information about dental coverage.



Local Health Offices: The Vermont Department of Health has 12 local health offices throughout the state. Local health offices maintain a list of dental practices in the area that are accepting Medicaid insurance. Use the QR code or [this link](#) to connect with your local health office.



Vermont Department of Health District Offices



Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and Free Clinics— People who do not have dental insurance and live in an FQHC service area may be eligible for a sliding scale fee. People who do not have dental insurance may be able to access dental care in a free dental clinic. Use the QR code or [this link](#) for a list of FQHCs and free clinics in Vermont.

