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- MAT combines medications and therapy to help treat substance use disorders. The goal of MAT is full recovery from an addiction.<sup>1-4</sup>
- MAT is commonly used for the treatment of opioid use disorder, including heroin. MAT may also be used to treat alcohol use disorder.<sup>1-4</sup>
- MAT may help reduce cravings and prevent withdrawal symptoms.<sup>1-4</sup>
- Medications are available in a variety of forms. These include tablets, liquids, and injections.<sup>1-4</sup>
- MAT has been shown to increase an individual's ability to maintain a job. MAT may also increase the chances of staying in treatment.<sup>1-4</sup>

## What is Substance Use Disorder?

A substance use disorder is the repeated use of alcohol and/or drugs that leads to impairment or distress. This may cause relationship and health problems as well as difficulty fulfilling roles at work, school, or home. Some symptoms of a substance use disorder include inability to control or reduce use and use of larger amounts over time.

## What is Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT)?<sup>1-2</sup>

Medication Assisted Therapy combines medications with substance use counseling and social support for the treatment of substance use disorders. MAT, combined with counseling and therapy, can increase chances of recovering from an addiction.

## How can MAT help treat substance use disorders?<sup>3-4</sup>

The medications used to treat substance use disorders come in a variety of forms such as tablets, liquids, and injections. Many of these medications help reduce cravings. Some medications block the "high" caused by the abused drug. Others cause very unpleasant side effects when a person takes both the medications and drug of abuse at the same time.

## Examples of Medication Assisted Therapies

- Opioid Use Disorder, including heroin: Methadone, buprenorphine/naloxone, naltrexone injection
- Alcohol Use Disorder: disulfiram, acamprosate, naltrexone injection

## Common misunderstandings of MAT<sup>1-4</sup>

1. MAT is just a substitute for opioids or alcohol.
  - a. FALSE. People will not experience a "high" from these medications. The medications may treat withdrawal symptoms or help reduce cravings. Some cause unpleasant side effects when taken at the same time as the drug of abuse.
2. MAT will make an individual less likely to maintain a job.
  - a. FALSE. When given at the proper dose and taken as prescribed, MAT does not adversely affect an individual's intelligence, chance of being hired, or physical abilities.
3. MAT can be used in place of therapy or counseling.
  - a. FALSE. MAT should be combined with counseling and social support to help increase chances of recovery.

## How effective is MAT?<sup>3-4</sup>

The goal of MAT is full recovery. MAT, in combination with counseling and therapy, has been shown to:

- Improve how long a person is expected to live
- Increase chances of staying in treatment
- Decrease dangerous over-use of drugs and decrease chances of overdose
- Increase chances to gain and keep a job
- Increase chances of recovering from an addiction

## What if I am interested in MAT?

Talk with your doctor about treatment options. MAT may not be right for every person living with a substance use disorder. When talking with your doctor, here are some questions to ask:

- How will MAT help?
- What symptoms will MAT help control?
- What side effects may occur?



Go online to find more information about Medication Assisted Therapy and to view the references for this toolkit.

[cpnp.org/390128](https://cpnp.org/390128)

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