

# **COVID-19 EMERGENCY WEAN MANUAL AND KIT**

**03/24/20**

**Dr. Robert Ben Mitchell, D.O.  
Opioid Dependence Treatment Program  
16375 NE 18th Avenue, Suite #310  
North Miami Beach, Florida 33162  
786 - 262 - 5750  
[www.Trafn.com](http://www.Trafn.com)**

## OVERVIEW

In the event that Suboxone and Subutex are no longer available due to the COVID-19 national state of emergency, it will be necessary to begin weaning off of these medications. People who are ready to wean often report only having mild flu-like symptoms for three to five days. But, if you are not ready to wean, you might experience stronger withdrawals.

There is no way to know ahead of time what your withdrawal experience will be. However, if you have been in stable recovery for a while, it is likely you have made many of the important changes necessary to lessen or even eliminate some or all of these symptoms.

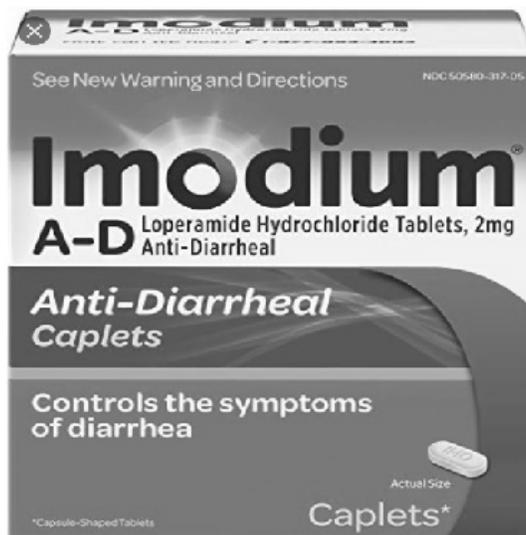
To help you through this transition period, I have worked with the pharmacy next to my office - Prescription Drug Foundation - to create a **GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG** that contains the most commonly used over-the-counter aids for withdrawals. In this manual you will find:

Imodium A-D	Page 1
Tums	Page 2
Benadryl	Page 3
Tylenol	Page 4
Miralax	Page 5
Pill Cutter	Page 6
Other Aids	Page 7
Non-Pregnant Patient Wean Schedule	Page 8
Pregnant Patient Wean Schedule	Page 9

You can make your own grab-and-go bag, or you can buy one for \$20 at

**Prescription Drug Foundation**  
**1777 NE 163rd St, North Miami Beach, FL 33162**  
**Phone: (305) 947-0433**

## IMODIUM A-D



### **YOUR GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG WILL CONTAIN 2mg generic for Imodium A-D 24 tablets**

Imodium A-D contains a weak opioid called loperamide. Though not useful for the treatment of pain, it can cause constipation like other opioids, so it is used to treat diarrhea. **DO NOT** take more than it says on the container - it can damage your heart in higher dosages.

Patients who run out of their buprenorphine often buy Imodium A-D over-the-counter to help relieve their withdrawal symptoms. While it will not relieve all of these symptoms, patients report that they are far better off with it than without it when going through withdrawals.

**REMEMBER:** You start Imodium A-D **AFTER** you have completed your wean with buprenorphine. Loperamide, the active ingredient in Imodium A-D, is an opioid class chemical, and some patients may experience adverse reactions if they take it with buprenorphine.

## TUMS



### **YOUR GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG WILL CONTAIN** Calcium Antacid 500 mg Tablets generic for Tums 150 tablets

Tums is an antacid made of sugar and calcium carbonate. It is also available in a sugar-free version. It provides relief from heartburn and indigestion by neutralizing stomach acid.

People with withdrawal symptoms often find it hard to eat, so they build up acid in their stomachs which can cause indigestion, heart burn, or even nausea and vomiting.

Used as directed on the container, this medication can help with many of the common, stomach related withdrawal symptoms.

## BENADRYL



### **YOUR GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG WILL CONTAIN**

Banophen (diphenhydramine hydrochloride)  
25 mg generic for Benadryl 24 tablets

Benadryl is a common, over-the-counter sleep aid. Sleep disturbance is one of the most common side effects of withdrawals.

Used as directed on the container, Benadryl can help ease many sleep disturbance symptoms.

**REMEMBER:** if you take any over the counter pain relievers labeled PM, like Tylenol PM, the “PM” part of the name indicates that it usually contains diphenhydramine hydrochloride (generic Benadryl) to make you sleepy. **DO NOT** take any over-the-counter “PM” medications with Benadryl.

## TYLENOL



### **YOUR GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG WILL CONTAIN** Acetaminophen 500 mg generic for Tylenol 24 tablets

Tylenol is one of the most common over-the-counter pain relievers and fever reducers used today.

Used as directed on the container, it can help with the body aches and elevated body temperatures common to withdrawals.

**REMEMBER:** if you take any over the counter pain relievers labeled PM, like Tylenol PM, the “PM” part of the name indicates that it usually contains diphenhydramine hydrochloride (generic Benadryl) to make you sleepy. **DO NOT** take any over-the-counter “PM” medications with Benadryl (see pag 3).

## MIRALAX



**YOUR GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG WILL CONTAIN**  
Polyethylene glycol 3350 17 gram generic for Miralax 14 doses

Opioids can cause constipation. The active ingredient in Imodium A-D (see page 1) is called loperamide, and it is an opioid, so it might cause constipation after you use it.

There are many laxatives which are effective against constipation due to opioid use. The most common ones are called senna laxatives and they include Ex-lax and Dulcolax.

Miralax is not a senna laxative, yet many patients have reported that it is gentler and just as effective as senna laxatives for opioid constipation.

## PILL CUTTER



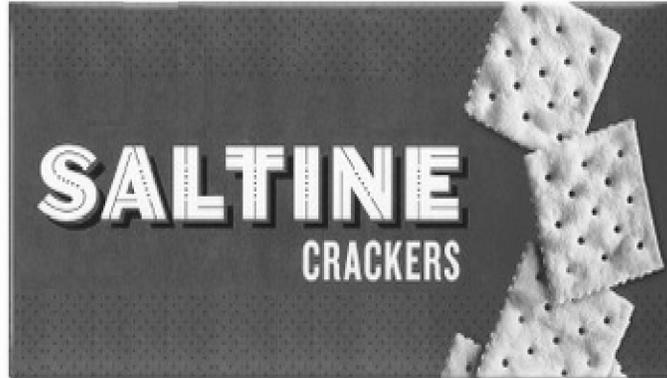
**YOUR GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG WILL CONTAIN**  
1 pill cutter - the one receive may look different than the one above

If you are using the 8 mg pill form of either Suboxone or Subutex, you will need to cut these pills into quarters so that each piece contains about 2 mgs of buprenorphine.

Pill cutters are designed to help you safely cut a pill into smaller pieces, while preventing those pieces from ending up lost or on the floor.

You could attempt to cut your pills without a pill cutter, but people who have done this often say that the pills ended up being crushed instead of cut, or the cut pieces flew off in all directions and were sometimes lost.

## OTHER AIDS



### **THIS WILL NOT BE IN YOUR GRAB-AND-GO WEAN BAG**

It is sometimes difficult to eat while going through even mild symptoms of withdrawals. In addition to any comfort foods that you find useful, have some plain saltine crackers available, too.

These crackers tend to be very gentle on the stomach, you can eat just one or two at a time as you feel comfortable to do so, and they help to absorb any acid that might be building up in your stomach due to a decrease in your appetite.

## Non-Pregnant Patient Wean Schedule

### **THIS IS 10 DAY WEAN THAT USES 8 PILLS OR FILMS OF 8 MG SUBOXONE OR SUBUTEX**

You will need to cut your 8 mg pills into quarter pieces of 2 mg each.

**Day 1-2:** 12 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8 mg pill or film 6 times/day.

**Day 3-4:** 8 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 4 times/day.

**Day 5-6:** 6 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 3 times/day.

**Day 7-8:** 4 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 2 times/day.

**Day 9-10:** 2 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 1 time/day.

**During days 1 through 10**, you can use any of the over-the-counter medications in this manual **EXCEPT** Imodium A-D. **DO NOT USE** Imodium A-D during days 1 through 10 (see page 1).

**Starting with day 11**, after you have finished using Suboxone or Subutex, you can use any of the over-the-counter medications in this manual, **INCLUDING** Imodium A-D. **YOU CAN USE** Imodium A-D starting on day 11 as long as you are no longer using Suboxone or Subutex.

## Pregnant Patient Wean Schedule

### **THIS IS 5 WEEK WEAN THAT USES 27 PILLS OR FILMS OF 8 MG SUBOXONE OR SUBUTEX**

You will need to cut your 8 mg pills into quarter pieces of 2 mg each.

**Week 1:** 10 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8 mg pill or film 5 times/day.

**Week 2:** 8 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 4 times/day.

**Week 3:** 6 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 3 times/day.

**Week 4:** 4 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 2 times/day.

**Week 5:** 2 mg per day = take 1/4 of an 8mg pill or film 1 time/day.

Pregnant patients tend to use lower dosages of buprenorphine, so as to expose their unborn child to the least amount of medication as possible.

If you are using **more than 12mg per day** of buprenorphine before you start this wean schedule, talk with the physician who is prescribing your buprenorphine to see if you need to start at a higher dosage.

Also, **DO NOT USE** any of the over-the-counter medications in this manual until you have consulted with your OB/GYN physician as to their safety during pregnancy.