

A Tool for Buprenorphine Care

(A series of monthly newsletters about buprenorphine treatment)

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INSIDE THE VA

Buprenorphine Tablet vs. Film Formulation

As reported, the original [makers](#) of buprenorphine/naloxone have disseminated information that they are no longer going to produce the tablet formulation of buprenorphine/naloxone and only manufacture/distribute a film formulation. There are purported and testimonial advantages and disadvantages of using the film over the tablet product. We reviewed several blogs and patient comments that discuss the advantages (and disadvantages) of using the film formulation. The film seems to dissolve faster than the tablet and stays tightly affixed to the sublingual mucosa. Patients report that they don't have "chalky glob" residual that occurs when using the tablets. The film reportedly has a better taste; the tablet formulation has a bitter taste (this can be mitigated by leaning the chin forward in the tablet formulation as the "bitter" taste buds are on the back of the tongue). However, this advantage seems to be due to the quick dissolution of the tablet and its ability to stick on the sublingual mucosa. Some patients report the film taste is worse as compared to the tablet when it is not placed sublingually. Additionally, some users believe the potency is not the same as their tablet dosage. A purported concern was misuse, abuse, and child safety of the tablet. The film is individually packaged in a child-resistant compact pouch and a 10-digit code is printed on each, making medication counts easy and medication tracking by the original provider and patient easier. However, to achieve this advantage, pharmacies must have a code scanner and database developed to track the individual packaging. There are some complaints that the film packaging is not discreetly discardable. This may make, for example, confidentially dosing at work more of a challenge. Early film formulations sometimes crumbled or broke upon opening the package. Additionally, the film formulation is more easily split than the tablet form, potentially increasing the ability to share the medication.

OUTSIDE THE VA

A Review of Janaburson's Blog

Those searching for helpful insight into the world of opiate addiction and medication-assisted treatment can find wisdom, experience, and a willing ear at Dr. Jana Burson's [blog](#). Dr. Burson has a firm stance that addiction is a disease and that treatment works. The comments sections of her articles are well populated with long-term experienced patients with addiction and those seeking refuge, advice, and information on how to enter treatment for themselves or for loved ones. Articles often encompass related news items and general descriptions that take the pulse of medication-assisted treatment including misuse warnings and political happenings.

MEDICATION-ASSISTED ADDICTION TREATMENT IN THE NEWS

- 1) [More Addictions Treated with Drug Therapy](#)
- 2) [FDA accepts Orexo Zubsolv new drug application](#)

RESEARCH UPDATE

- 1) Pain Physician. 2012 Jul;15(3 Suppl):ES59-66. [Conversion of chronic pain patients from full-opioid agonists to sublingual buprenorphine](#). Daitch J. **TAKE HOME POINT:** "Patients continuing buprenorphine SL therapy for more than 60 days reported significant decreases in pain (2.3 points)."
- 2) J Pediatr Pharmacol Ther. 2011 Oct;16(4):281-4. [Formulation of buprenorphine for sublingual use in neonates](#). Anagnostis EA. **TAKE HOME POINT:** "Based on the results of this study, the 30-day stability of the formulation should allow for convenient storage, less pharmaceutical waste, and decreased cost in future clinical trials of sublingual buprenorphine used for treatment of NAS."