

# Healthcare Professional Discussion Guide

If you or a loved one is considering treatment for opioid addiction, be sure you're aware of all treatment options. A conversation with a healthcare provider may help with questions about the treatment journey. This discussion guide was created to help you or your loved one get the conversation started.

## Things to consider when talking to a healthcare professional:

### 1 Be Informed.

Deciding what to ask a healthcare professional about treatment options can seem daunting. You or your loved one may want to ask about the treatment possibilities, the plan the provider is recommending, and the reasons for it. If there are other questions or concerns, don't hesitate to ask.

*If you're a caregiver, you may want to be involved in treatment discussions. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, or HIPAA, includes rules that protect the privacy of every adult's healthcare information. Under HIPAA, your loved one will need to give a healthcare provider or health plan permission to share information with you. That includes in-person meetings, phone conversations or written information. There are only a few exceptions such as emergency situations.*

### 2 Questions to Ask About Available Treatment Options.

- What kinds of treatments are available?
- How long do these treatments last?
- How often do these treatments happen?
- Which are covered by my (or my loved one's) insurance?
- Should therapy and/or counseling be part of a recovery program?
- Are there programs for treatment options to help with cost? What are the eligibility requirements? How do you, as a healthcare professional, partner with these programs?
- What other important information should I or my loved one know?

Please read pages 3 and 4 for **Important Safety Information** included in the Brief Summary of Important Facts about VIVITROL. Please see **Prescribing Information**, including **Medication Guide**. Please review the Medication Guide with your healthcare professional.

### 3 Discuss Counseling Options and Treatment Settings.

**Talk about:**

- group counseling
- individual counseling
- peer support groups

**Discuss treatment settings like:**

- hospitals or other medical facilities
- treatment programs that allow patients to work on their recovery while still living with their family and/or working at their job

### 4 Give Yourself Some Credit!

Whether you're on a recovery journey, or helping someone who is, it takes courage to seek out help. You're taking action. Gathering information. There's hard work ahead, but knowledge is a powerful force toward progress. Keep learning. Keep going. Your efforts can make a positive difference.



**Notes:**

As you move forward with this Healthcare Professional Guide, remember there are no right or wrong answers. Just be honest and open with your or your loved one's healthcare professional.

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## What is the most important information I should know about VIVITROL?

### VIVITROL can cause serious side effects, including:

1. **Risk of opioid overdose.** You can accidentally overdose in two ways.
  - VIVITROL blocks the effects of opioids, such as heroin or opioid pain medicines. **Do not** try to overcome this blocking effect by taking large amounts of opioids—this can lead to serious injury, coma, or death.
  - After you receive a dose of VIVITROL, its blocking effect slowly decreases and completely goes away over time. If you have used opioid street drugs or opioid-containing medicines in the past, using opioids in amounts that you used before treatment with VIVITROL can lead to overdose and death. You may also be more sensitive to the effects of **lower** amounts of opioids:
    - after you have gone through detoxification
    - if you miss a dose of VIVITROL
    - when your next VIVITROL dose is due
    - after you stop VIVITROL treatment

Tell your family and the people closest to you of this increased sensitivity to opioids and the risk of overdose.

2. **Severe reactions at the site of injection.** Some people on VIVITROL have had severe injection site reactions, including tissue death. Some of these reactions have required surgery. Call your healthcare provider right away if you notice any of the following at any of your injection sites:

- intense pain
- the area feels hard
- large area of swelling
- lumps
- blisters
- an open wound
- a dark scab

Tell your healthcare provider about any reaction at an injection site that concerns you, gets worse over time, or does not get better within two weeks.

3. **Sudden opioid withdrawal.** To avoid sudden opioid withdrawal, you must stop taking any type of opioid, including street drugs; prescription pain medicines; cough, cold, or diarrhea medicines that contain opioids; or opioid-dependence treatments, including buprenorphine or methadone, **for at least 7 to 14 days** before starting VIVITROL. If your healthcare professional decides that you don't need to complete detox first, he or she may give you VIVITROL in a medical facility that can treat sudden opioid withdrawal. **Sudden opioid withdrawal can be severe and may require hospitalization.**

4. **Liver damage or hepatitis.** Naltrexone, the active ingredient in VIVITROL, can cause liver damage or hepatitis. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any of these symptoms during treatment with VIVITROL:

- stomach area pain lasting more than a few days
- dark urine
- yellowing of the whites of your eyes
- tiredness

Your healthcare provider may need to stop treating you with VIVITROL if you get signs or symptoms of a serious liver problem.

## What is VIVITROL?

### VIVITROL is a prescription injectable medicine used to:

- treat alcohol dependence. You should stop drinking before starting VIVITROL.
- prevent relapse to opioid dependence, **after** opioid detoxification.

You must stop taking opioids before you start receiving VIVITROL. To be effective, VIVITROL must be used with other alcohol or drug recovery programs such as counseling. VIVITROL may not work for everyone. It is not known if VIVITROL is safe and effective in children.

## Who should not receive VIVITROL?

### Do not receive VIVITROL if you:

- are using or have a physical dependence on opioid-containing medicines or opioid street drugs, such as heroin. To test for a physical dependence on opioid-containing medicines or street drugs, your healthcare provider may give you a small injection of a medicine called naloxone. This is called a naloxone challenge test.

**If you get symptoms of opioid withdrawal after the naloxone challenge test, do not start treatment with VIVITROL at that time.** Your healthcare provider may repeat the test after you have stopped using opioids to see whether it is safe to start VIVITROL.

Please continue to read page 4 for **Important Safety Information** included in the Brief Summary of Important Facts about VIVITROL. Please see **Prescribing Information**, including **Medication Guide**.

Please review the Medication Guide with your healthcare professional.

# BRIEF SUMMARY OF **IMPORTANT FACTS** ABOUT VIVITROL®

(NALTREXONE FOR EXTENDED-RELEASE INJECTABLE SUSPENSION)

- are having opioid withdrawal symptoms. Opioid withdrawal symptoms may happen when you have been taking opioid containing medicines or opioid street drugs regularly and then stop. **Symptoms of opioid withdrawal may include:** anxiety, sleeplessness, yawning, fever, sweating, teary eyes, runny nose, goose bumps, shakiness, hot or cold flushes, muscle aches, muscle twitches, restlessness, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, or stomach cramps.
- are allergic to naltrexone or any of the ingredients in VIVITROL or the liquid used to mix VIVITROL (diluent). See the medication guide for the full list of ingredients.

## What should I tell my healthcare provider before receiving VIVITROL?

### Before you receive VIVITROL, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have liver problems, use or abuse street (illegal) drugs, have hemophilia or other bleeding problems, have kidney problems, or have any other medical conditions.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if VIVITROL will harm your unborn baby.
- are breastfeeding. It is not known if VIVITROL passes into your milk, and if it can harm your baby. Naltrexone, the active ingredient in VIVITROL, is the same active ingredient in tablets taken by mouth that contain naltrexone. Naltrexone from tablets passes into breast milk. Talk to your healthcare provider about whether you will breastfeed or take VIVITROL. You should not do both.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take**, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take any opioid-containing medicines for pain, cough or colds, or diarrhea.

**If you are being treated for alcohol dependence but also use or are addicted to opioid-containing medicines or opioid street drugs, it is important that you tell your healthcare provider before starting VIVITROL to avoid having sudden opioid withdrawal symptoms when you start VIVITROL treatment.**

## What are other possible serious side effects of VIVITROL?

### VIVITROL can cause serious side effects, including:

**Depressed mood.** Sometimes this leads to suicide, or suicidal thoughts, and suicidal behavior. Tell your family members and people closest to you that you are taking VIVITROL.

**Pneumonia.** Some people receiving VIVITROL treatment have had a type of pneumonia that is caused by an allergic reaction. If this happens to you, you may need to be treated in the hospital.

**Serious allergic reactions.** Serious allergic reactions can happen during or soon after an injection of VIVITROL. Tell your healthcare provider or get medical help right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- skin rash
- swelling of your face, eyes, mouth, or tongue
- trouble breathing or wheezing
- chest pain
- feeling dizzy or faint

### Common side effects of VIVITROL may include:

- nausea
- sleepiness
- headache
- dizziness
- vomiting
- painful joints
- decreased appetite
- muscle cramps
- cold symptoms
- trouble sleeping
- toothache

These are not all the side effects of VIVITROL. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away. You are encouraged to report all side effects to the FDA. Visit [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch), or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

## This is only a summary of the most important information about VIVITROL.

### Need more information?

- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

**Read the Medication Guide, which is available at [vivitrol.com](http://vivitrol.com) and by calling 1-800-848-4876, option #1.**

This Brief Summary is based on the VIVITROL Medication Guide (Rev. July 2013).

**Please see [Prescribing Information](#), including [Medication Guide](#). Please review the Medication Guide with your healthcare professional.**



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**Vivitrol**<sup>®</sup>  
(naltrexone for extended-release injectable suspension)