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PSYCHIATRY

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PATIENT EDUCATION

Naltrexone–bupropion

Contrave / Extended-release tablets

A guide for adults taking naltrexone–bupropion.
Follow the directions on your prescription and your provider's recommendations.

BUILD UP SLOWLY | NO OPIOIDS OR EXTRA BUPROPION

Formulations: Each extended-release tablet contains both medicines. The dose is increased over several weeks; the combination is not interchangeable with separately prescribed doses.

What it is used for

This combination supports long-term weight management in eligible adults alongside nutrition and physical activity changes. It is not approved as a stand-alone treatment for depression or substance use disorder.

How it works

Bupropion affects norepinephrine and dopamine signaling; naltrexone blocks opioid receptors. Together they influence pathways involved in appetite and food reward.

What to expect over time

Weight response is assessed after 12 weeks at the maintenance dose. If less than 5% of starting weight has been lost, labeling recommends stopping because meaningful longer-term benefit is unlikely. Your provider should direct that decision.

Taking your medication

- Follow the weekly starting schedule. Swallow tablets whole; do not cut, crush, or chew.
- Do not take with a high-fat meal.
- Skip a missed dose and resume the schedule. Do not double.
- Do not combine with other bupropion-containing medications. Discuss all opioid use before starting.

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NALTREXONE–BUPROPION / 02

Side effects and safety

Possible side effects

- Nausea, constipation, or vomiting
- Headache, dizziness, or insomnia
- Dry mouth
- Increased blood pressure or pulse

Keeping track of treatment

Some side effects resolve with time; others may require a change of medication. Discuss persistent or bothersome side effects with your provider.

Antidepressants can increase suicidal thoughts in people under 25. Watch for changes in mood or behavior at any age, especially when starting treatment or changing a dose.

Tell your provider about emotional numbness, unusual agitation, or a reduced need for sleep with increased energy. These changes may call for a treatment adjustment.

Have blood pressure and pulse checked and track weight. Report new mood changes and symptoms of liver injury.

If you take too much

For a suspected overdose, call Poison Control at **1-800-222-1222** immediately, even if you feel well. Call 911 for a seizure, collapse, trouble breathing, or inability to wake.

Before you start

Do not use with uncontrolled high blood pressure, a seizure disorder, anorexia or bulimia, ongoing opioid use, or another bupropion-containing medicine. Abrupt withdrawal from alcohol or certain sedatives can also rule out use. Stop weight-loss treatment if pregnant and contact your provider. Discuss breastfeeding.

Medicines and interactions

Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements. Have new medications checked before taking them.

Opioids can trigger severe withdrawal or overdose-related risks. A supervised opioid-free interval is required before starting when relevant.

Do not combine with an MAOI; a 14-day separation is generally required. Review seizure-threshold-lowering drugs and medicines affected by CYP2D6.

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Living with your treatment

When to get help

Emergency symptoms. Get emergency care for a seizure, severe allergic reaction, or sudden eye pain with vision changes. Fever with agitation, diarrhea, and stiff or twitching muscles may be serotonin syndrome and needs urgent assessment.

Prompt medical advice. Contact your provider right away for marked agitation, new hallucinations, or unusually high energy with very little need for sleep.

If you feel unsafe or have thoughts of self-harm, call 911 or go to an emergency department.

Your questions answered

Can I use opioid pain medicine while taking it?
Tell the treating clinician first. Naltrexone blocks opioid effects; taking more to overcome blockade can be fatal.

Does it replace my antidepressant?
No. It contains bupropion, but is prescribed and monitored for weight management. Review the complete treatment plan.

Everyday tips

A regular dose time and refill reminder can help prevent missed doses.

Bring a few specific observations to appointments: sleep, motivation, anxiety, and activities that have become easier or harder.

Storage and safety

Keep medication in its labeled container, away from excess heat and moisture and out of reach of children and pets. Do not share it. Ask a pharmacy about disposal of unused medication.

Sources

DailyMed: Contrave

Educational handout; does not replace your prescription or provider's recommendations.