

## **SUBOXONE TREATMENT INFORMED CONSENT**

**Please read this information carefully.**

Suboxone (buprenorphine + naloxone) is an FDA approved medication for treatment of people with opiate (narcotic) dependence. It can be used for detoxification or for maintenance therapy when prescribed by qualified physicians. Suboxone itself is a weak opiate and reverses actions of other opiates! It can cause a withdrawal reaction from standard narcotics or Methadone while at the same time having a mild narcotic pain relieving effect from the Suboxone.

The use of Suboxone can result in physical dependence of the buprenorphine, but withdrawal is much milder and slower than with heroin or Methadone. If Suboxone is suddenly discontinued, patients will have only mild symptoms such as muscle aches, stomach cramps, or diarrhea lasting several days. To minimize the possibility of opiate withdrawal, Suboxone may be discontinued gradually, usually over several weeks or more.

Because of its narcotic-reversing effect, if you are dependent on opiates, you should be in as much withdrawal as possible when you take the first dose of Suboxone. You must be off Methadone for at least 24 hours or off of other narcotics for at least 12 hours and showing signs of withdrawal before starting Suboxone. If you are not in withdrawal at the time of your first visit, you may not be given Suboxone, as it can cause severe opiate withdrawal while you are still experiencing the effect of other narcotics. You will be given the first dose in our clinic and you must return to the office after two hours. After that, you will be given further instructions and a prescription for Suboxone that can be filled at the pharmacy of your choice. Some patients find that it takes several days to get used to the transition to Suboxone from the opiate they had been using. After stabilized on Suboxone, other opiates will have virtually no effect. Attempts to override the Suboxone by taking more opiates could result in an opiate overdose. Do not take any other medication without discussing it with you physician first. Combining Suboxone with alcohol or some other medications may also be hazardous. The combination of Suboxone with medication such as Valium, Librium, Ativan, or Xanax has resulted in deaths.

The form of Suboxone given in this program is a combination of buprenorphine with a shortacting opiate blocker, naloxone. If the Suboxone tablet was dissolved and injected by someone taking heroin or another strong opiate it would cause severe opiate withdrawal. Suboxone tablets must be held under the tongue until completely dissolved. It is then absorbed from the tissue under the tongue over the next 30-120 minutes. If swallowed, Suboxone is not well absorbed from the stomach and the desired benefit will not be experienced.

We do not prescribe, under any circumstances, narcotics, Methadone, or sedatives for patients desiring maintenance or detoxification from narcotics.