



## Supporting Someone in Recovery

- If you have a loved one who is struggling to stop using opioids such as heroin, it can be hard to understand why they don't just quit. The reality is that they most likely have a health condition called Opioid Use Disorder (OUD). This disorder affects their brain structure, reducing their ability to stop themselves using opioids.
- People with OUD can and do recover, but every journey is different. There are many pathways to recovery, and people considering recovery must choose the path that best suits their needs and situation.
- It's also important to keep in mind that recovery is a journey with many ups and downs and often needs the support of ongoing medication.

It's important to remember that people with OUD can only begin recovery on their own terms. However you can talk to them about their situation and recovery options.

# Treatment Options

Because OUD is a health condition, it's important that when your loved one wants to move into recovery, they have the right medical care. There are a number of Medication-Assisted Recovery options available in Illinois that can be tailored to suit your loved one's needs and lifestyle.

- **Inpatient care:** Inpatient treatment options are intensive, residential treatment programs that allow your loved one to stop taking opioids away from their current environment. They will have 24-hour medical and emotional support, and different programs last between 28 days and 6 months.
- **Outpatient care:** Outpatient treatment options include programs that let your loved one stay at home and work around their existing job and home commitments. They will need to regularly attend clinics and appointments to receive medications and behavioral counseling.
- **Medications:** For both inpatient and outpatient care, it may be recommended that your loved one receive medications to help reduce craving and withdrawal symptoms to aid recovery. These medications, an important part of Medication-Assisted Recovery, are twice as effective at helping people reach a sustained recovery, in comparison to other ways to stop. Three options are:

**B** Buprenorphine  
(Suboxone<sup>®</sup>, Subutex<sup>®</sup>, Probuphine<sup>®</sup>)

**N** Naltrexone

**M** Methadone

<b>Type:</b>	Dissolvable pill	<b>Type:</b>	Monthly injection	<b>Type:</b>	Daily liquid medication
<b>Location:</b>	Prescription pills can be taken at home, injection is given at a clinic	<b>Location:</b>	Given at a clinic	<b>Location:</b>	Given at a clinic
<b>Support:</b>	Can be paired with optional counseling	<b>Support:</b>	Can be paired with optional counseling	<b>Support:</b>	Daily clinician support and counseling
<b>Benefit:</b>	Can be taken after you've been opioid-free for just 12-72 hours, can be taken at home, helps with withdrawal symptoms	<b>Benefit:</b>	Monthly injection allows for more flexibility, however you must be opioid free 10-14 days prior	<b>Benefit:</b>	Daily clinic visits give you added structure to your recovery and a daily check-in on your progress

To learn more about medications and find a local healthcare provider, visit [RethinkRecoveryIL.com](https://RethinkRecoveryIL.com).



## Ways to Support Your Loved One Through Recovery:

- **Provide emotional support during tough times.** You'll want to verbally encourage your loved one with positive reinforcement that their journey to recovery is courageous. You'll also want to make it known they have your support.
- **Encourage proper nutrition.** Healthy and well-balanced eating reduces mood swings and provides other benefits. Poor dietary habits contribute to increased cravings and the risk of relapse. It's also good to encourage your loved one to drink lots of fluids.
- **Minimize or remove any obstacles and challenges.** Your loved one is mentally and physically going through a lot of change. If you have capacity, make it easy for them to get to appointments by driving them, and help them pick up prescriptions and fill out any paperwork they need.
- **Maintain a productive schedule.** Boredom can cause your loved one to think more about their cravings, so do things like watching TV or movies, taking walks or short car rides, or reading magazines. By adding structure to their day, you can help them focus on other things.
- **Provide a stable and positive environment.** If you live with your loved one, keep the home a peaceful and stable place. Refocus any negative thoughts to the positives of recovery, and avoid having people who are a negative influence in the house.

# Withdrawal and Cravings

- **What is it?**

- Withdrawal is the body's response to suddenly being without substances after a period of long-term use.
- Symptoms of withdrawal can last anywhere from a few days to several weeks.

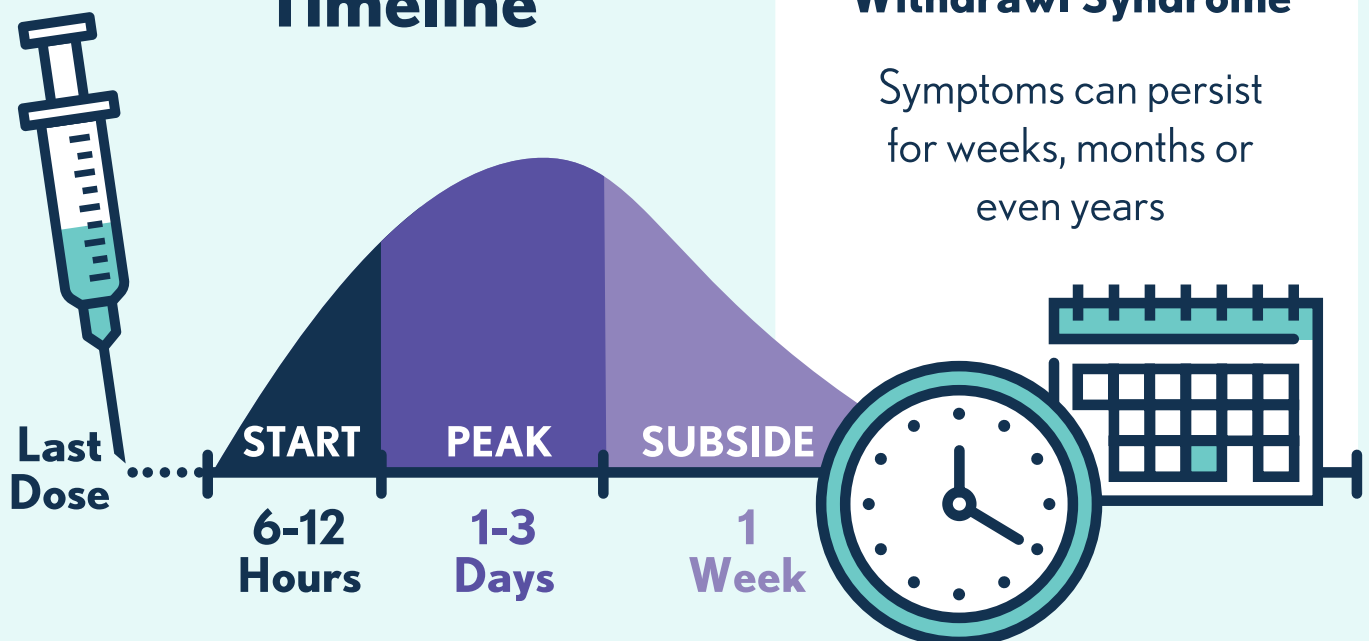
- **Why does it happen?**

- Over time, the body adapts to substance use to the point where it becomes dependent on the substances to function properly.
- Once a person suddenly removes substances from their routine, the body goes into a form of shock and responds with mental and physical symptoms as it tries to regulate itself.

- **Common symptoms of opioid use withdrawal:**

- Anxiety
- Sweating
- Body aches
- Insomnia
- Nausea
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Goosebumps
- Dilated pupils
- Intense urges to use

## Heroin Withdrawal Timeline



# Relapse

- Relapse is a common and expected part of recovery. Most people relapse at least once, and the average is four times. It should not be seen as a failure but just part of the process your loved one needs to go through to reach sustained recovery.
- Signs to look for:
  - Reminiscing about the days of their opioid use and viewing it in a positive light
  - Believing they can use opioids again without falling into a dangerous pattern of addiction
  - Sudden changes in behavior, such as increased isolation or avoidance
  - Doubting the effectiveness of the recovery process
  - Mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, stress, hopelessness, and others
- What to do if it happens:
  - **Don't blame or shame.** They are likely already feeling shame and guilt, and adding to that may make them feel like they might as well dive back into active addiction.
  - **Address your feelings, but maintain support.** Accepting and expressing your emotions in a healthy way is critical, but be sure to not take them out on your loved one. It's ok to feel sad or frustrated, but they will need help and understanding to get back on track.
  - **Maintain healthy boundaries.** While it may feel wrong to be strict with boundaries when your loved one is struggling, remember that love, support, and boundaries can coexist. Keeping firm boundaries can help keep them on the path to recovery, and while you support them on that journey, it must be clear that you can't support harmful behaviors that could lead to further relapse.



For more information and resources about how  
Medication-Assisted Recovery works, visit [RethinkRecoveryIL.com](https://RethinkRecoveryIL.com).

