For support with problem drug use and for other resources:

Talk to your doctor or **Call 311**

nyc.gov/health

NYC Health

BUPE

Do you have a problem with prescription painkillers or heroin?

BUPRENORPHINE can help.

WHAT IS BUPRENORPHINE?

Buprenorphine (or "bupe") is a medication that treats addiction to opioids, such as prescription painkillers (like Vicodin®, Oxycontin® or Percocet®) and heroin. Suboxone® is a common brand name for bupe.

HOW DOES BUPE WORK?

Bupe stops withdrawal symptoms and cravings. This makes it easier for you to stop using or cut down, so that you can focus on other activities that are important to you.

CAN BUPE CAUSE OVERDOSE?

It's hard to overdose on bupe by taking too much. However, it is dangerous to mix bupe with alcohol, benzodiazepines (or "benzos", like Valium®, Xanax® or Ativan®), or other sedating drugs. Mixing bupe with these drugs increases your risk of overdose.

DOES BUPE HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?

Side effects are different for different people. They are usually mild and may include constipation, nausea, headache and insomnia.

HOW LONG DO I NEED TO TAKE BUPE?

Everybody is different. Many people may benefit from long-term treatment; other people may need bupe for a shorter time.

CAN I SWITCH FROM METHADONE TO BUPE?

Yes, but talk to you doctor first to make sure you are on the right methadone dose before switching.

WILL MY HEALTH INSURANCE PAY FOR BUPE?

Yes. Medicaid, Medicare and most other health plans pay for bupe. Check with your health plan to make sure bupe is on the list of approved drugs.

HOW DO I GET BUPE?

You need a prescription. Your primary care doctor may prescribe bupe, so it helps to ask. Once you have a prescription, you can get bupe at a pharmacy and take it at home, just like other medications.

If your doctor does not prescribe bupe, call 311, or go to www.samhsa.gov and search buprenorphine to find other options for getting bupe.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT STARTING WITH BUPE?

- Your doctor will explain that you must be in some withdrawal from opioids when starting bupe.
- You should tell your doctor about any medications you are taking, since some can interact with bupe.
- You should tell your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Taking bupe is sometimes enough to help, but many people also benefit from counseling. Your doctor can help you decide whether counseling is right for you.