

NOTICE: FDA Warning – Dissolvable Buprenorphine

February 17, 2022

Dear provider,

The FDA has stated that there is a linkage between patients taking orally dissolving medications containing Buprenorphine and severe dental issues.

Buprenorphine is an opioid used to treat opioid dependence (addiction to opioid drugs including heroin and narcotic analgesics). Withdrawal symptoms can be prevented with the use of Buprenorphine which is available as a sublingual tablet, sublingual film and as a buccal film, usually to be taken by the patient once per day.

Dental problems associated with oral dissolvable Buprenorphine include:

- Dental caries, including rampant caries
- Tooth fracture
- Dental abscesses
- Infection
- Severe tooth erosion
- Dislodged fillings
- Tooth loss

THE FDA STATES:

- Many cases have been reported in patients with NO DENTAL PROBLEMS
- The use of Buprenorphine continues to be an important treatment for Opioid Use Disorder patients and those patients in severe pain, despite the risk factors

FDA RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Counsel your patients about the potential for serious dental problems that can occur with the use of transmucosal Buprenorphine use.
- Instruct patients on the ways to maintain good oral health when taking this medication
- Swish mouth gently with water and swallow after the medication has completely dissolved.
- Wait one hour BEFORE brushing your teeth to allow the mouth to return to oral homeostasis to avoid mechanical damage.
- Ask your patients about their dental issues and stress that a dental examination should be scheduled when beginning the use of Buprenorphine.
- Dentists should caution their patients that it is not advisable to suddenly discontinue use of Buprenorphine without consulting their physician as the consequences could be severe.

Thank you for your continued commitment to serving our members and ensuring the provision of quality care and services,

Oral Health Team

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