

BUPRENORPHINE SUPERVISION

Buprenorphine is a schedule 3-controlled drug and does not require entry into CD register. It is subject to controlled drug prescription writing and safe storage requirements.

- ◆ When the patient arrives: first, confirm patient's identity
- ◆ The daily dose should be dispensed and labelled in advance where possible
- ◆ When a patient is taking their dose of buprenorphine, it is vital that they adhere to the recommended timings of their dose, in order to avoid precipitated withdrawal. If the patient has been using methadone they should wait at least 24 hours after their last dose before taking their first dose of buprenorphine. If they have been using heroin, as it is shorter acting they should wait a minimum of 8 hours before taking the buprenorphine
- ◆ The patient should be showing signs of opiate withdrawal before taking their first dose of buprenorphine
- ◆ On the patient's arrival, the medication should be transferred from the dispensing container into patient's hand or disposable container
- ◆ Advise the patient to have a drink before hand. This will help to speed up the dissolution of the tablet
- ◆ The patient should be instructed to tip the tablet(s) directly under the tongue and leave them to dissolve. The tablets should not be swallowed
- ◆ The pharmacist should advise the patient to swallow as little saliva as possible
- ◆ The patient should be observed for approx 5 minutes. Supervision should ideally take place in private, a private room if possible or a suitable private area. The length of time that the tablets take to dissolve will vary from patient to patient. In general longer times are required where higher doses are used. In practice, supervision of the patient is most important for the first 2-3 minutes after administration, during which time the tablets will have started to dissolve
- ◆ The patient should remain in the pharmacy until the pharmacist is satisfied that all that remains is a chalky residue
- ◆ The pharmacist must be satisfied that the medication has not been concealed in the mouth