

**San Mateo County BHRS**  
**Client information for Long-Acting Injectable Naltrexone (Vivitrol®)**

**What is this drug used for?**

- Long-Acting injectable (LAI) naltrexone is used to treat people with alcohol or opioid use disorder
- The injection is given monthly, as opposed to the daily dosing required by other opioid use disorder medications
- It has been shown to treat alcohol and opioid use disorder only when used as part of a treatment program that includes counseling and support

**Most frequently reported side effects in association with LAI naltrexone therapy for alcohol use disorder**

- Nausea/vomiting – nausea is usually mild & improves within a few days after the first injection, less likely to occur with future injections
- Tiredness, headache, decreased appetite or other appetite disorders, muscle cramps
- Dizziness, sleepiness or sedation - avoid driving or operating heavy machinery until you know how LAI naltrexone affects you
- Injection site reactions - may include pain, tenderness, bumps, swelling, redness, bruising, or itching

**Most frequently reported side effects in association with LAI naltrexone therapy for opioid use disorder**

- Liver enzyme abnormalities, injection site pain, cold symptoms, trouble sleeping, and toothache

**Other possible side effects**

Liver damage: LAI naltrexone may cause liver injury in people who develop liver disease from other causes. Tell your doctor if you develop the following symptoms of liver problems:

- Stomach area pain lasting more than a few days, tiredness
- Yellowing of the whites of your eyes, dark urine

Depressed mood: Inform family members and the people closest to you that you are taking LAI Naltrexone. Contact your doctor right away if you experience symptoms of depression

Allergic pneumonia: Tell your doctor if you have difficulty breathing, wheezing, or a cough that doesn't go away

Severe injection site reactions: LAI naltrexone may cause severe injection site reactions, including tissue death. Tell your doctor right away if you notice any of the following at your injection site:

- Intense pain, swelling, lumps, the area feels hard
- Blisters, an open wound, a dark scab

Tell your doctor about any injection site reaction that concerns you, gets worse over time or does not get better by 2 weeks after the injection

Serious allergic reactions: Seek medical help immediately if you have a skin rash; swelling of face, eyes, mouth, or tongue; trouble breathing or wheezing; chest pain; or are feeling dizzy or faint

**Sudden opioid withdrawal**

- To avoid opioid withdrawal, you must stop taking any opioid-containing drugs **for at least 7 days (14 days for methadone & buprenorphine)** before starting LAI naltrexone
- Do not take LAI naltrexone if you have any symptoms of opioid withdrawal
- Tell your doctor of any recent use of opioids or any history of opioid dependence before starting treatment with LAI naltrexone. Sudden opioid withdrawal can be severe and may require hospitalization

**Risk of opioid overdose**

You may be more sensitive to lower amounts of opioids after detox, after naltrexone treatment is discontinued, after a missed dose, or near the end of the dosing interval

- Inform family members and the people closest to you of this increased sensitivity to opioids and the risk of overdose
- Taking large amounts of heroin or any other opioid to overcome the opioid-blocking effects of naltrexone while on LAI naltrexone; may lead to serious injury, coma, or death
- Get medical help right away if you have trouble breathing, become drowsy with slowed breathing; feel faint, dizzy, confused or have other unusual symptoms

**Other important information about LAI Naltrexone**

- Since LAI naltrexone can block the effects of opioids, you will not experience any effect if you use heroin or any other opioid in small amount while on LAI naltrexone. Also, you may not experience the same effects from opioid-containing pain-relieving, antidiarrheal, or anti-cough medications
- To ensure adequate medical treatment in an emergency, you should carry documentation to alert your health care provider of your treatment with LAI naltrexone
- Since LAI naltrexone is an intramuscular injection, once the medication is injected, it is not possible to remove it from the body
- LAI naltrexone may cause a false positive on some urine drug tests for the detection of opioids

**Tell your doctor if:**

- You become pregnant, intend to become pregnant or are breast feeding during treatment with LAI naltrexone
- Experience respiratory symptoms such as difficulty breathing, coughing or wheezing
- Experience any allergic reactions, unusual symptoms, or significant side effects while on LAI naltrexone