



Patient & Family Guide

2022

Opioid Recovery Program (ORP)

Port Hawkesbury and Antigonish Areas



www.nshealth.ca

Opioid Recovery Program (ORP)

The Opioid Recovery Program (ORP) is for people who are addicted to opioids.

We provide:

- Opioid maintenance therapy (methadone and buprenorphine/naloxone)
- Programs in:
 - › Physical health (like the Chronic Pain Clinic, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy)

AND

- › Mental health (like the Recovery Support Program, addictions counselling)

The ORP supports people on their recovery journey. We also support people to improve their overall health and mental wellbeing (how we respond to life's ups and downs). A team of health care professionals provides:

- › Assessment
- › Treatment planning
- › Relapse prevention
- › Supportive counselling

How do I access the ORP?

- To access this program, call the Mental Health and Addictions (MHA) Intake Service:
 - › Phone (toll-free): 1-855-922-1122
- You may also ask for a referral from your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner), other health care professionals (pharmacist), correctional services, or a community agency (community mental health service).
- **Note: If you leave a message, the MHA Intake Service will call you back from a phone number marked “Unknown” or “Private”. They will try to reach you up to 3 times. Please answer the call or call back when you are able.**

What will happen after I talk to the MHA Intake Service?

- The MHA Intake Service will send your information to the nearest ORP Clinic.
- An ORP nurse will call you to ask questions before you are admitted to the program.

Based on this meeting, you may be given an in-person appointment at one of the following ORP Clinics:

Eskasoni Health Centre

› Phone: 902-379-3200
4555 Shore Road
Eskasoni, NS

Wagmatcook Health Centre

› Phone: 902-295-2755
47 Humes Rear W Loop
Wagmatcook, NS

**Community Mental Health and Addictions -
Glace Bay Clinic**

› Phone: 902-842-2229

OR

› Phone: 902-842-4066
121 Union Street
Glace Bay, NS

Cape Breton Regional Hospital

› Phone: 902-563-2590
1482 George Street
Sydney, NS

New Waterford Consolidated Hospital

› Phone: 902-862-7195
716 King Street
New Waterford, NS

St. Martha's Regional Hospital

› Phone: 902-867-4500

25 Bay Street

Antigonish, NS

Port Hawkesbury Community Mental Health and Addictions

› Phone: 902-625-2363

708A - Unit 3 Reeves Street

Port Hawkesbury, NS

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

How should I get ready for my first appointment?

- **Do not use opioids or other substances, including alcohol, before your appointment.** This is so your ORP Clinic team can assess your needs and withdrawal symptoms.
- **Be ready to be honest about your opioid and substance use.** It is important for your ORP Clinic team to know your complete history so they can plan the right treatment for you.
- **Be ready for a physical exam.** It is important for your ORP Clinic team to know your complete health status so they can plan the right treatment for you.
- **Be ready to give a urine (pee) sample for a drug screen while someone watches.** You will have to do this at **all** ORP Clinic appointments **and** when your ORP Clinic team asks.
- Be ready to have other blood tests or diagnostic tests (electrocardiogram [ECG/EKG], chest X-ray) after your appointment.

What should I bring to my first appointment?

- Provincial health card
- All of your medications in their original containers (including over-the-counter medications, herbal medications, inhalers, eye drops, medicated skin products, patches, and supplements)
- Your contact information (including an email address) and the contact information of a support person (a phone number where we can leave a message)
 - › **It is very important to give us your most up-to-date contact information, so we can schedule appointments and stay in contact with you throughout the program.**

What will happen at my first appointment?

- You will meet the members of your ORP Clinic team. These health care providers specialize in trauma, addictions, and/or mental health. Your team members include:
 - › ORP Case Manager (a registered nurse who will help you in your opioid recovery)

- › Doctors and nurse practitioners who specialize in addiction medicine and may prescribe medication(s) for you
- › Nurses, social workers, and mental health clinicians who offer mental health and/or addictions support in the Clinic.
- You may be offered other mental health services (like addictions counselling, trauma support counselling, and referrals to other mental health professionals).

What treatments might be prescribed?

- Mental health and/or addictions support (see next page)
- Medication(s) (like Suboxone[®], methadone, Sublocade[®])
- Each person in the ORP will have different needs at different times. Your ORP Clinic team will create a treatment plan that is right for you. At the beginning of your treatment plan:
 - › You will have a lot of appointments in the Clinic.
 - › Your pharmacist will watch you take your prescribed medication(s) every day while we stabilize your dose (find the right dose of medication for you).

How often will I have to attend the ORP clinic?

When you start treatment, you must attend the ORP clinic every few days. As your medication dose stabilizes and you use less opioids, your appointments will be less often (every few days, **then every 1 to 2 weeks, then once a month**).

Can I use opioids when I start my medication(s)?

Do not use opioids while you are stabilizing on your medication(s). If you use opioids while you are stabilizing on your medication(s), there is a high risk of overdose. Your ORP Clinic team can prescribe medication(s) to help with your withdrawal symptoms.

For your safety, you will be given:

- › A naloxone kit – Your pharmacist will show you how to use it.
- › Clean IV kits or rigs (pre-packaged syringes), if you need them – It is important to safely dispose (put in a designated sharps container) used syringes. This is to prevent other people from getting sick. Ask your pharmacist how to safely dispose of your syringes.

Can I use other recreational drugs when I start my medication(s)?

- Medications like Suboxone[®], methadone, Sublocade[®], and other similar drugs are very strong. They can interact with recreational drugs and have a dangerous effect. **It is important to know which recreational drugs may interact with your treatment plan medication(s).** These interactions can harm you (like slow your breathing, cause a blackout, overdose, and even death).
- Recreational drugs that may interact with your treatment plan include:
 - › **Alcohol** (any amount)
 - › **Benzodiazepines** (like Ativan[®], Xanax[®], clonazepam, Valium[®])
 - › **Other opioids** (like heroin, fentanyl, Dilaudid[®], Percocet[®], hydros (hydrocodone), Tylenol[®] #1, Tylenol[®] #3)
 - › **Sleeping pills and any drug that causes sleepiness** (like zopiclone, gabapentin, trazodone, quetiapine)
 - › **Medications ordered online or from the ‘dark web’, or bought on the street** – These may be mixed with unknown amounts of opioids, cocaine, benzos (benzodiazepines), or other medications that may cause death.

- › **Cocaine** – This may be mixed with unknown amounts of opioids, benzos, dexies (amphetamines), or other medications that may cause death.

We hope that treating your opioid use disorder will cause you to no longer need any other addictive substances. There are many non-opioid medications and therapies that can help your chronic (ongoing) pain, mental health, and/or trauma. The ORP Clinic team will work with you to use supports like the Chronic Pain Clinic, addiction counselling, or trauma counselling to treat these issues.

How long will it take to stabilize my medication dose?

Each person is different. The ORP Clinic team will work with you to find your **stable dose**. This is the medication dose that stops your withdrawal symptoms for 24 hours (1 day). Finding your stable dose may take a few days or longer (2 to 6 weeks) depending on the medication prescribed.

When can I start taking my medication(s) at home?

- We recommend that you be in treatment for at least 2 months before you start taking your medication at home (called take-home doses or carries).
- You will be asked to sign an ORP Treatment Agreement that explains how take-home doses work.
- Take-home doses will be offered when you have progressed well in the ORP Clinic meaning you:
 - › have shown you can use your medication(s) safely (taking your medication as prescribed, not missing doses, being respectful to pharmacy staff, being responsible for transfers between pharmacies).
 - › are at a stable dose (you no longer have cravings, you no longer use street opioids, you have not had withdrawal symptoms for 24 hours (1 day), and can function in order to achieve your goals).
 - › have attended your appointments.
 - › have been in good communication with the ORP Clinic team.
 - › are starting to achieve your treatment plan goals.

- › are ready to be responsible for your medication(s).
- › have given 6 to 8 drug-free urine samples in a row (scheduled and random) over 8 weeks.

How long will I be in treatment?

Each person is different. Most treatment plans last for at least 12 months (1 year) or longer. This includes taking medication(s) and accessing mental health support.

How will I know when I am recovered?

Each person's recovery from opioid use disorder is different. Your recovery will depend on your goals. For example, a successful recovery may include:

- › Not using opioids
- › Being able to work
- › Getting custody of your children
- › Improving your relationships with your loved ones

We are here to help you reach the goals that are important to you. **We are happy you took the first step in your recovery from opioid use. We look forward to seeing you.**

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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Prepared by: Opioid Recovery Program, Port Hawkesbury and Antigonish areas, Eastern Zone

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.