

**Here are this week's health care news highlights from AskaPatient:**

- Removing tonsils in childhood could make people more susceptible to respiratory and infectious diseases later in life. <http://ow.ly/g71T30kqOzu> (06-11-18)
- Your kitchen towels may be home to a host of bacteria that can cause food poisoning. <http://ow.ly/SiLF30kqOKc> (06-11-18)
- Vermont signs law that will require all residents to have health insurance by 2020. <http://ow.ly/4jF430kqONG> (06-11-18)
- No bariatric surgery necessary? Scientists create a pill that coats the digestive tract to prevent the absorption of nutrients. <http://ow.ly/qO2l30ks4px> (06-12-18)
- Diet soft drinks linked to a doubled stroke risk and increased risk of dementia. <http://ow.ly/Ajat30ks4vH> (06-12-18)
- Large corporations are getting involved in their employees' healthcare plans to combat the ever-rising costs. <http://ow.ly/ITDx30ks4B2> (06-12-18)
- Some spinal cord injuries can require artificial ventilation for the rest of the patient's life, but a hydrogel shows promise in restoring natural breathing. <http://ow.ly/eDMs30ks4KN> (06-13-18)
- Venom of a Brazilian wasp appears to kill cancer cells while leaving healthy ones alone in recent study. <http://ow.ly/1kMj30ktaH3> (06-13-18)
- Creating a vaccine for each disease a mosquito carries may not be feasible, but what about one vaccine for all of them? <http://ow.ly/YxOU30ktbeM> (06-13-18)
- Hundreds of common medications can cause depression, but patients may be unaware of the risk. <http://ow.ly/leSe30kuhcl> (06-14-18)
- Another reason to keep an eye on your blood pressure: people with hypertension show signs of dementia on an MRI. <http://ow.ly/OAP830kuhm5> (06-14-18)
- People's IQ scores have been dropping since 1970, perhaps due in part to lifestyle changes. <http://ow.ly/3kit30kuhuC> (06-14-18)
- Restricting opioid painkiller availability has many people abandoning their doctor for the internet as a source of drugs. <http://ow.ly/EXpS30kvqbz> (06-15-18)
- Replacing just half a serving of potatoes and rice with lentils can reduce blood sugar by 20 percent. <http://ow.ly/ikJB30kvqgH> (06-15-18)
- Kentucky Attorney General sues Walgreens for dispensing excessive amounts of opioids. <http://ow.ly/TuT830kvqo2> (06-15-18)
- Kellogg's recalls Honey Smacks cereal just before CDC announces salmonella outbreak across 31 states. <http://ow.ly/CUsr30kwzSo> (06-16-18)
- Rats regain use of their paws after spinal cord injuries thanks to a novel gene therapy that signals nerves to mend themselves. <http://ow.ly/t6Cn30kwzUU> (06-16-18)
- Foods that have both carbs and fats are more rewarding to our brains, even if we aren't crazy about the food. <http://ow.ly/Dspd30kwzYA> (06-16-18)

**From AskaPatient: This week the FDA approved generic version of opioid addiction treatment Suboxone film; but it's complicated**

On Thursday, June 14, the FDA announced that it had approved the first generic versions of **Suboxone** (buprenorphine and naloxone) sublingual (applied under the tongue) / buccal (applied in the cheek) **film** for the treatment of opioid dependence. Naloxone is the ingredient used as an injection or nasal spray to reverse the effect of an overdose. FDA is working towards making **naloxone** more widely available as an OTC to treat opioid overdose, and the drug is available as an OTC nasal spray antidote in many states. **Buprenorphine** is itself an opioid, and helps to quell the withdrawal symptoms of opioid addiction.

Suboxone, a combination of buprenorphine and naloxone, is used as a maintenance drug for opioid dependence. Generic companies Mylan Technologies Inc. and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories received FDA approval to market buprenorphine and naloxone **sublingual film** in multiple strengths. Tablet versions of the buprenorphine and naloxone combination (Zubsolv and various generics) are available. The tablet version, like the "film" version, is administered under the tongue and typically dissolves in about five minutes.

**The complications:**

1. Suboxone maker **Indivior** (formerly Reckitt Benckiser) is accused of trying to block generic competition to Suboxone. In 2016, it was sued by 35 state attorneys general after it discontinued the original tablet version of the drug and encouraged doctors to switch patients to the Suboxone sublingual film strip. The lawsuit maintains that the film version of the drug was only developed in order to save the company's market share, while Indivior said that the new treatment was created because the tablet version posed more of a risk to children who might accidentally encounter the drug. The Federal Trade Commission has also been investigating Indivior since 2016 for alleged antitrust issues.

2. On Friday June 15, just one day after the FDA gave approval to Mylan and Dr. Reddy's to manufacture generic version of Suboxone, the U.S. District Court for New Jersey granted a temporary restraining order that compels Dr. Reddy's to immediately cease its launch activities related to the Suboxone film product. Indivior, in its press release, also announced it had launched litigation against Dr. Reddy related to its patent for Suboxone film. Both Dr. Reddy's and Mylan, if they offer the generic product, will be entering the U.S. market "at risk," because of ongoing patent litigation with them and other generics manufacturers. Mylan (which also has a history of antitrust accusations for its pricing of the EpiPen) had reached a patent litigation settlement with Indivior. Suboxone accounts for about 80% of Indivior's sales. Because of inevitable generic competition for Suboxone, the company is counting on expanding the market for its latest product Sublocade, approved in November as the first **once-monthly**, extended release buprenorphine, an injectable drug for treating moderate to severe opioid addiction.

### Drug Treatments for Opioid Addiction

Rating	Drug	Company
3.9	<a href="#">NALTREX ONE HCL</a> (NALTREX ONE HYDROCHLORIDE)	AMIDE PHARM, BARR, OTHERS
3.4	<a href="#">REVIA</a> (NALTREX ONE HYDROCHLORIDE)	DUPONT MERCK
3.3	<a href="#">SUBOXON E</a> (BUPRENO RPHINE HYDROCHLORIDE; NALOXON E HYDROCHLORIDE)	INDIVIOR
3.4	<a href="#">SUBUTEX</a> (BUPRENO RPHINE HYDROCHLORIDE)	INDIVIOR
4.1	<a href="#">BUPRENE X</a> (BUPRENO RPHINE HYDROCHLORIDE)	RECKITT AND COLMAN
3.5	<a href="#">ZUBSOLV</a> (BUPRENO RPHINE HYDROCHLORIDE; NALOXON E HYDROCHLORIDE)	OREXO

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**Key to ratings scores:**

5-Very Satisfied: this medicine cured me or helped me a great deal.

4-Satisfied: this medicine helped.

3-Somewhat Satisfied: this medicine helped somewhat.

2-Not Satisfied: this medicine did not work to my satisfaction.

1-Dissatisfied: I would not recommend taking this medicine.

(click drug name to read patient reviews for these medications.)

**Sources and more reading on this topic:**

1. FDA press release, June 14, 2018: "FDA approves first generic versions of Suboxone sublingual film, which may increase access to treatment for opioid dependence"

<https://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm610807.htm>

2. Chart illustrating the spike in opioid overdose deaths (including fentanyl, heroin, and opioid pain drugs) in 2016

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/9/5/16255040/opioid-epidemic-overdose-death-2016>

3. Alleged Suboxone "scheme" to protect its product

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/suboxone-creators-shocking-scheme-to-profit-off-of-heroin-addicts>

4. Indivior press release: June 15, 2018

<http://www.indivior.com/investor-news/indivior-granted-temporary-restraining-order/>

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