

Digital Health Tools for Opioid Use Disorder

Are there online or mobile technology resources for OUD?

Yes. Digital therapeutics and health applications for opioid use disorder (OUD) can support treatment by providing easily accessible behavioral therapies. Digital therapeutics and mobile health applications deliver therapy on a computer, tablet, or smart phone. Some therapeutics are regulated as a medical device, must be approved by the FDA, and prescribed by a clinician.

How do they work?

Digital therapeutics and health applications work in different ways:

- Some offer **educational content** for substance use disorders, including OUD. Patients complete practice exercises or quizzes to assess their understanding of the concepts. Educational topics that may be provided include:
 - Problem solving
 - Recovery support skills
 - Understanding factors that drive substance use
 - Coping with cravings and other challenging feelings and situations
 - Recognizing and changing negative thoughts
 - Drug refusal skills
- Some provide **cognitive behavioral therapy** to support skill-building and enhance motivation during treatment for OUD.
- Some may utilize **contingency management** and offer the chance to earn cash rewards based on urine drug screen results or progress in treatment.
- Some may offer **private messaging** capabilities to promote communication between patients and the treatment team.
- Many provide **remote monitoring** of patient-reported assessments, triggers, cravings, adherence, and medication dosing. Clinicians can view patient progress through the treatment modules and self-reported information on an electronic dashboard.



What are the benefits?

Digital therapeutics and health applications for opioid use disorder can allow clinicians to help promote remission of OUD symptoms and support recovery with the additional flexibility of a virtual platform. Some digital therapeutics are associated with increased retention in treatment and decreased illicit substance use, though many digital health interventions have limited research on their effectiveness.

Some examples of digital therapeutics and health applications

- CBT4CBT™
- Connections: from CHES Health
- DynamiCare
- reSET-O®

References

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