

# MYTHS VS FACTS

## Ibogaine

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HEALing Communities Study  
Kentucky

Ibogaine is a drug derived from the plant *Tabernanthe iboga*. In the United States (US), it is a Schedule I drug, meaning it has no accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse. In other countries, it has been used for opioid withdrawal management.

### MYTH

Ibogaine is a safe option to help treat opioid withdrawal

### FACT

Some studies show ibogaine helps to relieve opioid withdrawal, but there are serious risks when taking it. **Deaths and severe adverse effects, including life-threatening heart problems, have resulted from ibogaine treatment.**<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> There are several effective, FDA-approved therapies for opioid withdrawal and opioid use disorder (OUD) that are safer than ibogaine.

### MYTH

After ibogaine treatment, no further treatment is needed for OUD

### FACT

There are no studies of ibogaine showing long-term benefit in the treatment of OUD.<sup>5</sup> Ibogaine does not bind to the opioid receptor so it does not protect against respiratory depression and fatal overdose like FDA-approved treatments.

### MYTH

Ibogaine is a helpful treatment for stimulant (e.g., cocaine, methamphetamine) use disorder

### FACT

Unfortunately, there are no FDA-approved medications to treat stimulant use disorder. While some people report reduced cravings for a short time after ibogaine, research does not show ibogaine is helpful for reducing and stopping use of stimulants.

### MYTH

Ibogaine is more cost-effective than other opioid withdrawal and OUD management options

### FACT

Ibogaine treatment occurs outside of the US and is costly (e.g., \$10,000). **If complications occur, your insurance may not cover the medical costs to treat these complications.** In comparison, buprenorphine (Suboxone®) and methadone are cost-effective and covered by all Kentucky Medicaid plans.

### MYTH

If you have had limited success with FDA-approved OUD treatments (buprenorphine, methadone, or naltrexone), ibogaine is a good option to consider.

### FACT

**The short and long-term safety, efficacy, and cost-effectiveness of ibogaine for opioid withdrawal and OUD treatment is unproven so it cannot be recommended.** There are many reasons why your previous attempts with FDA-approved medications may not have produced long-term remission and recovery. Don't give up. **Work with your clinician to find a new treatment plan that considers safe, proven medication options, harm reduction, and recovery support services.**

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2. Litjens RP, Brunt TM. How toxic is ibogaine? *Clin Toxicol (Phila)*. 2016;54(4):297-302.

3. Schep L et al. Ibogaine for treating drug dependence. What is a safe dose? *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2016 Sep 1;166:1-5.

4. Knuijver T et al. Safety of ibogaine administration in detoxification of opioid-dependent individuals: a descriptive open-label observational study. *Addiction*. 2022 Jan;117(1):118-128.

5. Köck P et al. A systematic literature review of clinical trials and therapeutic applications of ibogaine. *J Subst Abuse Treat*. 2022 Jul;138:108717.