
METHADONE (Methadose) Fact Sheet for Patients

Generic Name: Methadone (METH-uh-doan)

Brand Name: Methadose

What Does It Treat?

This medication is used to help manage moderate to severe opioid use disorder. It is also used to provide relief from moderate to severe pain.

How Does It Work?

Methadone is a drug that helps lessen withdrawal symptoms and cravings for opioids. Using it is linked to reduced illicit opioid use and deaths due to overdoses, as well as lower rates of death from cancer, suicide, alcohol-related issues, and heart diseases.

How Do I Take It?

Methadone comes as a tablet when used for pain, and as an oral solution when used for opioid use disorder. For opioid use disorder, it is typically taken once daily. You'll start with a lower dose that will be increased depending on your symptoms.

Where Do I Get It?

Methadone for the treatment of opioid use disorder must be dispensed from a federally regulated facility called an opioid treatment program, commonly known as a "methadone clinic." Initially, you'll visit the clinic six days a week. As your treatment progresses, you may be able to take some doses home, and your visits may drop to once a week.

How Long Will I Take It?

Stopping methadone can lead to an increased risk of death from opioid overdose, so many people continue to take it indefinitely. Do not stop taking it on your own; discuss with your provider if you'd like to consider stopping it.

What if I Miss a Dose?

If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember, unless it's nearly time for your next dose. In that case, skip the missed dose. Do not take a double dose to make up for the missed one.

What Are Possible Side Effects?

- Most common: Constipation, dizziness, sleepiness, nausea, sweating.
- Serious but rare: Changes in heart rhythm (QT prolongation), severe respiratory depression.

What Else Should I Know?

- Methadone may interact with other medicines you're taking, so be sure to tell your healthcare provider about all your medications.
- Methadone is a tightly regulated substance and must be dispensed according to specific rules. For more information, check with your local methadone treatment facility.
- Since methadone builds up in your body with each dose, you might need to reduce your dose after three to five days to prevent potential side effects.