

Methadone Use

Imagine a life that no longer revolves around methadone dependence.

Though methadone is a legal substance, it can be **JUST AS DEADLY** as other drug addictions.

Narcotics are a type of drug intended to relieve pain and cause drowsiness. Methadone is a legal drug used to treat narcotic addictions. A synthetic drug and narcotic itself, methadone can also relieve intense pain for individuals with a terminal illness. It's available as a tablet, solution, or injected liquid form. As with any substance, methadone can quickly lead to drug abuse if used incorrectly.

SYMPTOMS OF METHADONE ABUSE

One of methadone's intentions is to relieve withdrawal symptoms from other narcotic use for up to 36 hours. For example, a heroin addict might be prescribed methadone to help curb their

heroin cravings without creating the normal euphoria, or high.

Many people take methadone at a treatment program facility. Here, the drug administration is supervised by treatment staff. However, if a person becomes physically dependent on methadone, it's likely they will experience withdrawal effects when they quit. Common symptoms include nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, cramps, and muscle tremors.

OVERDOSE RISKS

If a user is unaware that methadone won't cause the same euphoria as heroin or other prescription drugs like OxyContin, they can be prone to overdose. Individuals will consume larger quantities of the drug hoping for a euphoric state, not realizing it's impossible to achieve. The previous dose could also still be in their system. A methadone overdose can result in shallow breathing, increased blood pressure and heart rate, coma, or even death.

ACTION STEPS

- ✓ **Know your dosage** - If you're prescribed methadone, it's important to take the correct amount. Never take a larger or more frequent dosage.
- ✓ **Talk to your doctor** - Be sure to tell your doctor about any family history of addiction or mental illness. This helps to assess your risk of developing a methadone dependence.
- ✓ **Limit accessibility** - Never let anyone

else take your medication. Be aware of how much you have left and keep away from children. Any unused medication should be disposed.

- ✓ **Exercise good judgment** - It's important to use discernment as your body is adjusting to the prescribed methadone dosage. Do not operate a vehicle or heavy machinery until you know how the medicine affects you.
- ✓ **Monitor symptoms** - Be aware of any side effects or symptoms you're experiencing. Your doctor may need to adjust your dosage accordingly. Talk to your doctor before you stop methadone, as withdrawal symptoms may occur.
- ✓ **Seek help** - If you're tempted to abuse methadone or other narcotics, talk with your doctor or a peer support group. There is strength in partnership.

KEEP IN MIND

Recovering from any addiction is difficult and scary, but you're not alone. Your best chances of success are when you have a strong support network and when you participate in counseling. Be courageous and allow others to walk this road with you. Recovery was never meant to be experienced alone.

What steps will you take today to help set yourself, or the one you care for, free from methadone abuse?