

What Is Methadone And Why Is It Prescribed?

Methadone is an opioid medication that is used in hospice for the treatment of severe and complex pain. It is also helpful in treating and targeting neuropathic pain. This medication can be prescribed in tablet or oral liquid forms. It is often ordered as a scheduled medication to reduce the severity of chronic symptoms, and you may still need an additional short-acting opioid medication for the treatment of sudden or urgent symptoms. Although Methadone has been used in some settings as a replacement therapy for addiction treatment, it is more commonly used to treat pain.

What Are Common Side Effects Of Methadone?

Some side effects you may experience include:

- **Drowsiness & Fatigue:** This side effect may occur initially and is usually temporary, subsiding a few days after your body adjusts to the medication.
- **Constipation:** Opioid-Induced-Constipation is common. To reduce the risk of this symptom, HopeWest will start a bowel medication to be taken while using methadone. If you still experience constipation while using methadone and a bowel medication, tell your nurse.
- **Nausea:** This side effect may initially occur, but tends to wear off after a few days of taking the medication. Taking your medication with a light snack may help reduce nausea symptoms.
- **Dizziness:** To reduce your risk of falls, change position slowly when getting up. If this symptom persists, tell your nurse.

How Do I Take This Medication?

- Be sure to follow the directions given by your provider. Never use Methadone in larger amounts than prescribed.
- Methadone tablets may be crushed and mixed with a small amount of liquid or food if you have difficulty swallowing, or an oral liquid form can be used.
- A HopeWest nurse will show you how to measure liquid medication. The measured dose can be administered under the tongue or against the cheek for ease of swallowing.
- It is important not to miss or skip doses of Methadone. If you forget to take a dose, call HopeWest.

What This Medication Will Not Do When Taken As Prescribed:

- When taking Methadone as prescribed, this medication will not hasten death and it will rarely cause addiction.
- As your disease progresses, your body may develop a tolerance to this medication and you may require an increase in your dosage to effectively treat symptoms.

Contact HopeWest at any time for assistance or if you have additional questions.
A Registered Nurse is available 24/7 including after hours, weekends, and holidays.