

# Follow Directions

## How to Use Methadone Safely

### Methadone Is a Proven Road to Relief...If You Keep Your Eyes on the Road

Methadone provides relief to patients who do not respond to non-narcotic pain medications and to individuals who suffer from addiction and dependence on heroin and narcotic pain medicines.

*Here are some simple ways to reduce the risks:*

- Know and share your complete health history with health professionals, especially if you are a first-time user. Other medicines may interact with methadone and cause heart conditions.
- Take methadone exactly as prescribed. Follow your doctor's directions exactly.
- Never use more than the amount prescribed, at the times prescribed. If you miss a dose or if you feel it is not working, do not take extra.
- Use caution when taking methadone. Don't consume alcohol. Be careful driving or operating machinery.
- Take care not to abuse methadone. It can be addictive.
- Call 911 if you take too much methadone or overdose.
- Take steps to prevent children from accidentally taking methadone; never give methadone to anyone else.
- Store methadone at room temperature and away from light.
- Dispose of unused methadone by flushing it down the toilet.

#### Take Side Effects Seriously

Some are emergencies. Patients should stop taking methadone—and contact a physician or emergency services right away—if they:

- Have difficulty breathing or shallow breathing
- Feel lightheaded or faint
- Get hives or a rash; have swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Feel chest pain
- Have a fast or pounding heartbeat
- Have hallucinations or confusion

### Need More Information?

Patients who develop a problem with methadone or have questions should speak with a physician or contact 1-800-662-HELP.

### Helpful information can also be found at the following Web sites:



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)  
[www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)  
[www.csat.samhsa.gov](http://www.csat.samhsa.gov)

CSAT's Division of Pharmacologic Therapies  
[www.dpt.samhsa.gov/methadonesafety](http://www.dpt.samhsa.gov/methadonesafety)

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)  
[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)