Using Methadone for Chronic Pain
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How can methadone help me?

Methadone is an opioid analgesic (painkiller). It is often used to manage chronic pain. Methadone is a good choice compared to other opioid pain medications. It is less expensive than other options.

How do I take methadone?

• You must take this medication exactly as your doctor tells you to.
• Only increase or decrease your dose exactly as your doctor tells you.
• Do not stop taking this medication suddenly or you may have withdrawal symptoms.
• Methadone may be taken with or without food.
When do I take it?
It is best to take this medication at evenly spaced times during the day (every 8-12 hours). How often you take a dose is different from person to person. Please follow the dosage schedule prescribed by your doctor.

What if I miss a dose?
If you miss a dose, take it as soon as possible. Do not take the missed dose if it is less than 4 hours before your next dose. Then return to your regular schedule.

Some special precautions
• Talk to your doctor before taking this medication if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
• Do not stop taking this medication unless your doctor tells you to do so.
• Increase or decrease your dose exactly as your doctor tells you to. This will help you get the best pain relief and the fewest side effects.
• Methadone stays in the body longer than other pain medications and can build up in your system. This means that you should be monitored closely by your doctor and/or Pain Management Unit nurse when starting the medication.

• Do not stop taking this medication all of a sudden as you may have withdrawal symptoms. If your doctor asks you to take less or more, or stop taking it, your dose will be changed slowly over time.

• Tell your dentist, and any new doctors or pharmacists, that you are taking methadone.

• Methadone may make you light-headed or drowsy. Make sure you know how your body reacts to this medication before you drive, use machines, or do other jobs where you need to be alert and able to see well.

• Check with your doctor before you take any other medications.

• Do not drink alcohol while taking this medication.

Call your doctor or the Pain Management Unit at 902-473-4130 if you have pain that keeps getting worse for more than one week.
What side effects can happen while I am taking methadone?
You may have some side effects when you start taking methadone. Many side effects will go away within 2 weeks of starting the medication.

Call your doctor or the Pain Management Unit if any of the following side effects are bothering you:
› Headaches
› Dizziness and/or vertigo
› Drowsiness
› Constipation
› Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
› Muscle twitching or lack of control
› Confusion
› Hallucinations
› More sensitivity to pain
› Sweating

What are your questions? Please ask. We are here to help you.
Call your doctor right away if you:
• Are very tired
• Are sleeping all the time
• Have confusion and/or hallucinations
• Have slowed breathing or any breathing problems

How do I store my methadone?
• A locked box is strongly recommended.
• Keep methadone and all other medications out of reach of children and pets.
• Store liquid forms in the fridge in a locked box since there are other items such as food and/or drinks in the fridge.
• Liquid form medication can be taken as is or mixed with juice.
• Store tablets at room temperature (15-30 °C).
• Do not store medications in a damp place such as the bathroom.