

# Methadone

## (METH – uh – DOAN)

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Methadone is an opioid (narcotic) medication. It stays in the system a long time and the dose must be slowly changed. A common name for Methadone is Metadol<sup>®</sup>. Methadone is used for the treatment of pain, especially neuropathic (sharp and burning) pain. It is also used to treat opioid addiction.

- Methadone comes in tablets and a liquid.
- Methadone is also a powder and can be made in different strengths. Your pharmacist will prepare it in a clear unflavoured liquid for you with the correct strength.
- You should have an ECG (electrocardiogram) before starting Methadone and after stabilizing on your dose.

### Taking Liquid Methadone

- Take Methadone as directed by your doctor. This is very important.
- Measure the dose with an oral syringe from the pharmacy. Kitchen measuring spoons are not accurate.
- Add the unflavoured liquid to fruit juice (other than grapefruit), flavoured beverages or flattened pop.
- Drink.
- Storage:
  - The liquid prepared by your pharmacist lasts up to 4 to 6 weeks in the refrigerator. The tablets and manufacturer prepared liquid do not need to be in the refrigerator. Store in refrigerator unless pharmacist says it is not necessary.
  - To prevent accidental use by children or others in your house, all narcotics should be stored in a locked box. (Available at larger pharmacies or check the internet, search: “medication lock box”).

### Reminders

- You may have a different medication to take when the pain breaks through between regular doses.
- Methadone may cause changes in hormone levels and loss of sex drive. Talk with your doctor about hormone replacement.

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- Methadone can cause constipation or hard stools. Eat a high fibre diet of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Drink plenty of fluids. Talk with your pharmacist or doctor about taking laxatives or stool softeners.
- Drug interactions: some medications can change how Methadone works. This means that you may get too much resulting in an overdose or too little resulting in withdrawal. Your doctor needs to know all the medications that you take. Check with your pharmacist every time you start a new medication, including prescriptions, non-prescriptions and herbal.

### **Tell your doctor:**

- about all your medications, especially those that cause drowsiness
- about all medical conditions or are pregnant or breastfeeding
- if your menstrual period stops

### **Do NOT:**



- stop Methadone suddenly. Check with your doctor first before stopping this medication.
- drink alcohol while taking Methadone.
- drive or operate dangerous machinery until you know how this medication affects you.
- eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice.

### **Methadone can cause serious problems. Call your doctor or seek medical help right away if you have:**

- slow heartbeat
- heart pounding
- trouble breathing
- blurred or double vision
- difficult or painful urination
- confusion, hallucinations or severe drowsiness
- cold clammy skin

Contact your pharmacist if you have any questions about your medication.