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## **METHADONE CLINIC OF EAST TEXAS PAIN PILLS/OPIATE ADDICTION**

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**What is Methadone?** Methadone is a drug commonly used to treat opiate addiction & relieve pain. It is not intended to treat addictions to other drugs such as alcohol, cocaine, marijuana or other non-opioid drugs. Methadone can be taken as a tablet, oral solution or injectable liquid. It blocks the receptors in the brain that are affected by opiates such as heroin & prescription drugs, enabling users to gradually detox from opiates without experiencing painful withdrawal symptoms. **How does Methadone work?** When individuals start using opiates, the brain requires a constant supply of the drug to occupy the receptors in the brain. Methadone occupies these receptors; blocking the high opiates provide & making the user feel more stable. Methadone reduces the drug cravings & harsh withdrawal symptoms that often lead to relapse without creating the sense of euphoria associated with the abuse of morphine, heroin & other opiates. Methadone's effects last 24-36 hours, meaning that most patients benefit from one daily dose. **Is Methadone safe?** When used as prescribed, Methadone can be taken continuously over a period of weeks, months & even years without harsh side effects. According to the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, methadone is "a rigorously well-tested medication that is safe & efficacious for the treatment of narcotic withdrawal & dependence."

- Methadone is a legal medication that is produced by licensed pharmaceutical companies & strictly monitored using quality control standards.
- Methadone is administered under the supervision of a physician, following strict guidelines.
- Methadone does not impair mental functioning & is not sedating or intoxicating.
- Patients on methadone are able to work, drive, feel pain & normal emotional reactions, & go about their ordinary lives.
- Methadone is pregnancy safe.

**Is Methadone effective?** Methadone has been used for more than 30 years as an effective treatment for opioid addiction. Decades of scientific research have demonstrated methadone's effectiveness. A 1994 study found that "rates of illegal drug use, criminal activity & hospitalization were lower for methadone maintenance patients than for addicts in any other type of drug treatment program."

**What are the benefits of Methadone maintenance?** In addition to being safe & effective, methadone treatment is one of the most affordable options available to opiate addicts. When used as prescribed, methadone has been proven to relieve withdrawal symptoms, reduce opiate cravings & return chemical & emotional balance. By enhancing the individual's ability to function, methadone treatment improves the user's relationships, career & overall stability. **Am I substituting one type of addiction for another?** Methadone has very different physical effects than heroin, morphine & other opiate drugs. It is not a drug substitute, but rather a medication used in an approved course of treatment to overcome opiate addiction. Methadone also helps patients reduce typical drug seeking behaviors associated with opiate abuse, such as unsuccessful efforts to stop using, forsaking obligations to get more drugs & using in spite of negative consequences. Some experts compare methadone treatment to the use of insulin for individuals with diabetes. The diabetic individual is "dependant" upon insulin, but are effectively managing a chronic disease using a prescribed & carefully monitored medication. **How long will I need to take Methadone?** The length of methadone maintenance treatment program depends on a number of personal factors. Many patients remain in treatment for many months, & some continue to use methadone for indefinitely (as with many chronic medical conditions). While methadone can safely be taken for months & even years, safe withdrawal from methadone is possible. As with any type of long-term medication regimen, ending methadone use must be done slowly, carefully & with supervision. **How can I learn more about methadone maintenance & methadone treatment program?** For more information about methadone maintenance & methadone treatment centers, call 903-520-4710.

## Information about Methadone

### What is methadone?

Methadone is a drug commonly used to treat opiate addiction and relieve pain. Methadone is not intended to treat addictions to other drugs such as alcohol, cocaine, marijuana or other non-opioid drugs.

Available in the U.S. since 1947, methadone can be taken as a tablet, oral solution or injectable liquid. Methadone blocks the receptors in the brain that are affected by opiates such as heroin and prescription drugs, enabling users to gradually detox from opiates without experiencing painful withdrawal symptoms.

### How does methadone work?

When individuals start using opiates, their brain requires a constant supply of the drug to occupy the receptors in the brain. Methadone occupies these receptors; blocking the high opiates provide and making the user feel more stable.

Methadone reduces the drug cravings and harsh withdrawal symptoms that often to lead to relapse without creating the sense of euphoria associated with the abuse of morphine, heroin and other opiates. Methadone's effects last between 24 and 36 hours, meaning that most patients benefit from one daily dose.

### Is methadone safe?

When used as prescribed, methadone can safely be taken continuously over a period of weeks, months and even years without harsh side effects. According to the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, methadone is "a rigorously well-tested medication that is safe and efficacious for the treatment of narcotic withdrawal and dependence."

Other important facts to know about the safety of methadone are:

- Methadone is a legal medication that is produced by licensed pharmaceutical companies and strictly monitored using quality control standards.
- Methadone is administered under the supervision of a physician, following strict guidelines.
- Methadone does not impair mental functioning and is not sedating or intoxicating.
- Patients on methadone are able to work, drive, feel pain and normal emotional reactions, and go about their ordinary activities.
- Methadone is pregnancy safe.

### Is Methadone effective?

Methadone has been used for more than 30 years as an effective treatment for opioid addiction. Decades of scientific research have demonstrated methadone's effectiveness. For example, a 1994 study found that "rates of illegal drug use, criminal activity, and hospitalization were lower for [methadone maintenance] patients than for addicts in any other type of drug treatment program." The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that weekly heroin use decreased by 69 percent among outpatient methadone maintenance patients.

### What side effects will I experience if I begin taking methadone?

Studies show that there are no serious side effects associated with the medically supervised use of methadone. Some people have reported minor issues such as constipation, water retention, drowsiness, skin rash, excessive

sweating and changes in libido. But in the majority of cases, these symptoms subside once the individual finds the proper dosage for their individual needs.

**What are the benefits of methadone maintenance?**

In addition to being safe and effective, methadone treatment is one of the most affordable options available to opiate addicts. When used as prescribed, methadone has been proven to relieve withdrawal symptoms, reduce opiate cravings and return chemical and emotional balance. By enhancing the individual's ability to function, methadone treatment improves the user's relationships, career and overall stability.

**Am I substituting one type of addiction for another?**

Methadone has very different physical effects than heroin, morphine and other opiate drugs. It is not a drug substitute, but rather a medication used in an approved course of treatment to overcome opiate addiction. Methadone also helps patients reduce typical drug seeking behaviors associated with opiate abuse, such as unsuccessful efforts to stop using, forsaking obligations to get more drugs and using in spite of negative consequences. Some experts compare methadone treatment to the use of insulin for individuals with diabetes. The diabetic individual is "dependent" upon insulin, but they are effectively managing a chronic disease using a prescribed and carefully monitored medication.

**Will methadone show up on a drug test?**

Methadone will not result in a positive test for opiates such as morphine or heroin. The only way for a company or other organization to detect methadone is to test for it specifically, which is not a common practice. People who are participating in approved methadone maintenance programs are not abusing illegal drug. In fact, methadone patients are covered under the Americans with Disability Act, which means that methadone use cannot be used to deny employment.

**Will taking methadone affect my ability to drive a car?**

The law does not prohibit methadone patients from operating motor vehicles or other forms of machinery. When taken as prescribed, methadone does not produce sedation or intoxication.

**How long will I need to take methadone?**

The length of methadone maintenance treatment program depends on a number of personal factors. Many patients remain in treatment for many months, and some continue to use methadone indefinitely (as with many chronic medical conditions). While methadone can safely be taken for months and even years, safe withdrawal from methadone is possible. As with any type of long-term medication regimen, ending methadone use must be done slowly, carefully and with supervision.

**How can I learn more about methadone maintenance and methadone treatment programs?**

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