

# Excerpts from our Patient Handbook

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opiate addiction and blocks the “high” by not producing the euphoric highs and lows experienced by an opiate addict.

Withdrawal from methadone is much slower than that from opiates. As a result, it is possible to maintain an addict on methadone without harsh side effects. Many methadone maintenance programs treat patients continuously, sometimes over a period of years.

Each treatment program is individualized based on the patient’s overall health and the level of opiate addiction. It brings about a balance of chemicals in the body so that the individual’s health is stabilized after a period of time. In addition to the medical aspects of the treatment program, SEGTC believes that comprehensive social and rehabilitation are of equal importance.

Methadone is given by mouth in the SEGTC treatment program. Please pay strict attention to the following:

- Methadone produces dependence by the body.
- Methadone blocks the effects of other opiate medicines.
- Methadone prevents withdrawal symptoms caused by stopping other opiate medicines.
- Properly prescribed, a methadone dose will decrease or stop the desire to use other opiates.
- Methadone will not cause sleepiness or intoxication.
- There are many medical and environmental changes that can change your dose requirements. Your methadone dose will be calibrated specifically to accomplish these goals. Your dose may increase, decrease, or remain the same during your treatment program.

It can be very harmful to both mother and infant to withdraw from opiate addiction during a pregnancy; therefore, methadone treatment program is recommended and preferred for women in these circumstances. Although no drug or medicine is risk-free during pregnancy, reports show that many women who were pregnant and took methadone as a treatment, caused no harm to their infants. Also, breast-feeding can be done while on methadone.

- Female patients anticipating detoxification from methadone should receive a pregnancy test before starting voluntary dose reduction, when indicated by their physician. Patients are encouraged not to become pregnant during a treatment program; however, if a woman becomes pregnant while taking the methadone treatment, she should notify her physician IMMEDIATELY, and she SHOULD NOT STOP the treatment until after the baby is born. Since drug abuse and stress can interfere with regular menstrual cycles, women should be specifically alert in this area.
  - For female patients: If you become pregnant during an SEGTC methadone treatment program, you should inform your physician IMMEDIATELY. Your health will be closely coordinated with your obstetrician, and your dosing will be monitored via blood or urine
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