

Methadone

Names	The generic drug name is methadone (METH-a-done). Dolophine® and Methadose® are brand names. There may be other names for this medication.
How Do I Take This Medication?	Methadone comes as a liquid, tablet, or tablet for suspension. If it causes an upset stomach, take it with food or milk.
Why Am I Taking Methadone?	Methadone is used to relieve moderate to severe pain.
How Does It Work?	Methadone is an opioid (narcotic) analgesic. It works by decreasing the brain and nervous system's response to pain.
What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?	<p>Tell your doctor if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• are allergic to methadone, other opioid analgesics, other medicines, foods, dyes, or preservatives• are breastfeeding, pregnant, or trying to get pregnant• have or have ever had difficulty urinating; an enlarged prostate (a male reproductive gland); Addison's disease (a condition in which the adrenal gland does not make enough of certain natural substances); seizures; or thyroid, pancreas, gallbladder, liver, or kidney disease.• are taking herbal products, especially St. John's wort and tryptophan. <p>This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, herbal, or diet supplements that you are taking.</p>
How Do I Store and Dispose of Methadone?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children.• Store it at room temperature and away from light and excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom).• If this medication has expired, or if your provider told you to stop taking it, do not put them in the garbage or down the toilet. <p>Roswell has drug disposal containers available on the 1st floor of the main hospital. They are located just past the ATM on the left.</p>

What Are Some
Possible Side Effects?

- Loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Constipation
- Drowsiness, lightheadedness, and/or dizziness
- Hypotension
- Flushing and/or sweating
- Itching or rash
- Headache and/or mood changes

How Can I Manage
These Side Effects?

- To help prevent nausea, avoid fried, spicy, and fatty foods. Eating small, frequent meals may help. If you feel nauseous, try foods and drinks that are 'easy on the stomach' or made you feel better when you were sick in the past. These generally include bland foods, ginger ale, dry crackers, and toast. Ask your doctor about medication to prevent and treat constipation.
- To help avoid constipation, eat high fiber food and drink at least 2-3 quarts of fluid every 24 hours, unless you are instructed otherwise.
- Using lotion may relieve itching. Keep the area clean.
- If nausea or itching lasts more than 1 week, talk to your doctor.
- Ice chips, drinking plenty of water, and rinsing your mouth with an alcohol-free mouthwash may help with a dry mouth.
- To help avoid dizziness when you change positions quickly, get out of bed slowly. Rest your feet on the floor for a few minutes before you stand up.

When Should I Call
the Doctor?

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room if you have signs of a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis): swelling or tingling in your face, mouth, or throat; chest tightness; trouble breathing; dizziness; or fast/pounding heartbeat (palpitations)

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- signs of an allergic reaction: itching, hives, rash
- signs of an overdose: difficulty breathing, excessive sleepiness, hallucinations, fainting, weak muscles, cold and clammy skin, slow heartbeat (pulse) or a bluish color in your skin, fingernails, lips, or around your mouth
- seizures
- palpitations, chest pain, or shortness of breath

Call your doctor as soon as possible if you have:

- constipation
- lightheadedness, sleepiness, or drowsiness that does not go away
- nausea that does not go away or any episodes of vomiting

**What Else Should I
Know About
Methadone?**

- Methadone may be habit forming. Take methadone exactly as directed. Do not take a larger dose, take it more often, or take it for a longer period of time or in a different way than prescribed by your doctor.
- If you have been taking methadone for an extended period of time, do not stop taking it suddenly. Your doctor may need to decrease your dose gradually to prevent withdrawal symptoms
- Methadone may cause a prolonged QT interval (a rare heart problem that may cause irregular heartbeat, fainting, or sudden death). Tell your doctor if you or anyone in your family has or has ever had long QT syndrome; or if you have or ever had a slow or irregular heartbeat; low blood levels of potassium or magnesium, or heart disease
- Do not share this medication with anyone else.
- Drinking alcohol, taking prescription or nonprescription medications that contain alcohol, or using street drugs during your treatment with methadone increases the risk that you will experience serious, life-threatening side effects. **Do not drink alcohol, take prescription or nonprescription medications that contain alcohol, or use street drugs during your treatment.**
- This drug may cause drowsiness or dizziness. Do not drive a car, operate heavy machinery, or participate in other possibly dangerous activities until you know how methadone affects you.
- Tell your doctor if your pain is not well controlled, or if you have new or a different type of pain.
- If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking methadone.
- If you would like more information about methadone, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.