

Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program



Vector Health Clinics - Overview

Vector Health Clinics is a highly trained team of compassionate healthcare professionals who are specialized in addiction medicine and are devoted to helping clients to deal with opiate dependence and improve their lives.

What is Methadone?

Methadone is a synthetic opioid useful in the treatment of opioid dependence. Examples of opioids include: Codeine, Morphine, Heroin, OxyNeo, Oxycodone, Opium, Doda Tea, Percocet, Percodan, Fentanyl Patch, Dilaudid, Demerol, Tylenol #1, 2, 3, 4 etc. Clients on a proper dose of methadone can improve their life by minimizing withdrawal symptoms while blocking the euphoric effects of opioids.

In Ontario, methadone is available only by prescription from a doctor with specialized training. Additionally, only a pharmacy which has employed a pharmacist with specialized training can dispense methadone.

Adherence to a methadone maintenance treatment program can ultimately lead to a reduction in the use of opioids or ideally the discontinuation of their use altogether.

Understanding the Methadone Maintenance Treatment Program

Vector Health Clinic's program consists of the following components:

- Gathering patient information and past medical history
- Initial urine screening for illicit drugs
- Ongoing urine screening for illicit drugs
- Methadone prescribing based on individual patient needs
- Ongoing physician follow-up

Methadone Administration

Methadone is usually mixed with juice and taken orally once a day. The dosage can increase every three or four days (as long as no doses are missed), until the client stabilizes and does not experience withdrawal symptoms.

The daily administration of methadone is **witnessed by the pharmacist for the first two months of the program**. If a number of conditions are successfully passed (including urine drug screening for illicit drugs) the client will receive take-home doses also known as "carries".

For children or people not opioid dependent, ingesting methadone can be lethal.

Continuous participation in Vector Health Clinic's methadone maintenance treatment program can result in any/all of the following changes in the client's lifestyle:

- Improvement in overall health status
- Improvement in employment / financial status
- Improvement in social functioning
- Reduction or elimination in cravings for illicit drugs
- Elimination of withdrawal symptoms
- Improvement in self-esteem
- Regaining of the respect & trust from family, friends and associates

Ultimately leading to improving your overall quality of life.

Methadone Side Effects

Most medications have some side effects. Methadone is usually a well-tolerated medication, and as treatment continues and a stable dose of methadone is established, tolerance to most side effects develops.

The most common side effects reported are constipation, sweating, drowsiness, changes in weight or reduction in libido (men). Our doctors are highly experienced to help deal with these side effects should they occur.

How Do I Access the Program and How do I Pay for it?

You can enrol in the methadone maintenance program by visiting any of the Vector Health Clinics (during regular business hours) to schedule an assessment by a physician. A referring physician, psychologist, employer or other allied health professional can also arrange for an assessment on your behalf.

The Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), pays for all medical visits at Vector Health Clinics. For services not covered by OHIP, such as prescriptions, there may be additional fees (if applicable), which may be covered either in full or partially by an employer or other private health care insurance plans.

Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) covers the cost of methadone for those clients who qualify. The Trillium Drug Plan, under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, also covers the cost of methadone for those who qualify. Many private insurance companies may also cover the cost of prescription medication through extended health coverage.

Will I Get Addicted to Methadone?

Methadone is offered as a medical treatment, and is prescribed only to people who are already dependent on opioids. Methadone provides a safe alternative to the danger and desperation of sourcing illegal opioid drugs, and frees people from the cravings to use.

As with any medication, there is also the potential for abuse, as methadone is a powerful drug and can be dangerous to those unfamiliar with its effects. However, methadone maintenance is a long-term treatment, and this prolonged treatment with proper doses and supervision is medically safe.

How Long Does the Program Last?

Typically, most clients will remain on the program for at least one to two years; however, predicting long-term recovery from drug dependence will vary by client.

Recovery indicators include:

- Successful stabilization and tolerance to the methadone dose
- Lifestyle changes; program compliance willingness to participate in counselling and/or support group(s)
- Refraining from illicit and/or narcotic drug use for at least six months; knowledge of relapse prevention strategies

Program Termination

If the client and his or her doctor elect to end treatment, the methadone dose is tapered down gradually over many weeks or months, easing withdrawal symptoms.



Vector Health Clinics

Monday to Friday 8 am - 4 pm
Sat and Sun 9 am - 12 pm

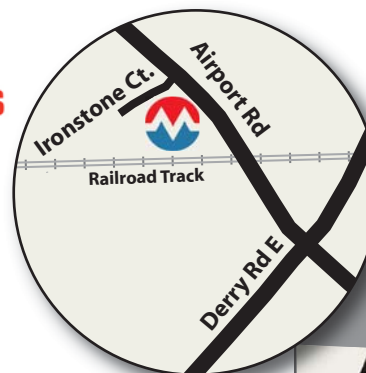
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Airport Derry Pharmacy

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