

Methadone Saves Lives.

Prescription Painkillers and Methadone Maintenance Treatment

- Treatment
- Counselling
- Support

What are opioids?

Opioids include substances like opium, morphine, codeine, oxycodone and heroin. When prescribed for pain, they are effective for dealing with injuries, surgery or illness. In some instances, however, opioids can produce a euphoric high and can be very addictive.

Opioid addiction on the rise

An estimated 30,000 people in Ontario have an opioid addiction. The majority of people currently seeking treatment for opioid related problems are using prescription medications, obtained legally or illegally. It's a very real problem. Yet many of us are not even comfortable talking about it – let alone searching for solutions.

Dealing with this problem requires information, patience and care.

Common painkillers

- **oxycodone**
(e.g., Percocet)
- **codeine**
(e.g., Tylenol #3, Tylenol #1)
- **morphine**
- **hydromorphone** (e.g., Dilaudid)
- **meperidine** (e.g., Demerol)



We created www.methadonesaveslives.ca to help people with opioid addictions and their friends and families talk about opioid drugs and learn about available treatments, including counselling and medically supervised methadone maintenance treatment.

MMT: A proven method of care

Methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) is a medically recognized treatment that, when combined with counselling and other social and community supports, is an effective treatment for opioid addiction.

Methadone is a long-acting opioid that helps manage cravings and alleviates withdrawal. It helps people with opioid addictions achieve stability, allowing them to return to healthy and productive lives. That's good for people and good for communities.

Methadone: FAQs

Is it replacing one addiction with another?

Think of methadone as a potential treatment option – the same way you would consider any other medication. The right dosage, combined with support and counselling, eliminates physical withdrawal symptoms and allows people to lead a stable life.

Will methadone make me high?

At a therapeutic oral dose, methadone does not produce the euphoric feeling of being high.

How long will I have to be on methadone?

The length of time a person remains on methadone depends on the individual. Some people may taper off; others may remain in methadone treatment for many years.

Are there any side effects?

Once your dose is stabilized, methadone is usually a very well-tolerated medication. Most people experience few, if any, side-effects, which may include sweating and constipation.

Will the availability of methadone have a negative impact on my neighbourhood?

Since methadone is a prescribed drug that eliminates physical withdrawal symptoms, it allows people to lead a stable life without resorting to potentially criminal behaviour to get drugs.

Are there other treatment options?

Yes, addiction counselling and support groups such as Narcotics Anonymous are options to consider. Buprenorphine (marketed as Suboxone in Canada) is another medication used in opioid substitution treatment.

“I can see changes in people very quickly after they start on the program. In two or three weeks, their faces are brighter, their mood is better, they are turning their lives around”

Dr. Lisa Bromley
Sandy Hill Community
Health Centre, Ottawa

Methadone Maintenance Treatment.

MMT isn't just used to treat people who are dependent on heroin. In fact, more and more people in Ontario turn to methadone to treat an addiction to prescription painkillers.

A few years ago I got into trouble with drugs. It was a tough time –I was going through a nasty divorce and was very depressed. The good news is I got through it, thanks to counselling and methadone. Now I have a job and a good support system. My boss even covers for me when I have to pick up my take-home doses every week. It hasn't been easy, but I can honestly say things are looking up.

Kelly, on MMT for 2 years

I experimented with drugs in my late teens. Before I knew it I was hooked on pills and in way over my head. When I finally did seek help, I was told to quit cold turkey. Big mistake. Fortunately, I found a treatment that helped me: counselling and methadone. I've got my life back.

Catherine, on MMT for 4 years

It hasn't been easy getting the methadone I need to stay clean. I've hitchhiked through snowstorms and worse. One doctor thought I was just trying to get high. But I'm one of the lucky ones. Now I've got a clinic in my neighbourhood and I'm counselling teens.

Sam, on MMT for 3 years

Since I started on methadone, I've been free of the crushing physical and mental burden of using illegal drugs. I feel better, I look better – I'm even playing hockey with my son again.

Tony, 36, on MMT for 6 years

My reward has been the chance to enjoy my family, to find employment, to have good health in my mind and body and to be in control, for once, of my own happiness.

Margaret, 51, on MMT for 11 years

The whole stereotype that surrounds methadone prevents so many people from getting involved. People need to know that methadone is okay, that it works.

Beth, 42, on MMT for 4 years



Methadone Saves Lives.ca

Help is available.

If you or someone you know have had an addiction to heroin or prescription painkillers for over one year, and have tried other methods of treatment, methadone health care provider or addiction counsellor about entering a methadone maintenance treatment program that's right for you.

For more information, visit
www.methadonesaveslives.ca

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