

## ECHO Idaho: Opioid Addiction and Treatment

Methadone

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The speaker has no significant financial conflicts of interest to disclose.



# Learning Objectives

- What is Methadone?
- Medications used to treat opioid use disorder (OUD)
- Benefits and adverse reactions
- Federal regulations and monitoring

# What is Methadone?

- ▶ Methadone is one of 3 FDA – approved medications used in the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD). It can also be used to treat moderate to severe pain. It has been used for the treatment of OUD for more than 50 years.
- ▶ Methadone is a synthetic, long-acting mu-opioid receptor agonist. For treatment of OUD is typically dosed once daily. Dosed more frequently when used for treating pain, analgesic affects between 4 and 8hrs.

# Medications Used to Treat Opioid Use Disorder

METHADONE	BUPRENORPHINE	NALTREXONE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Mu-opioid agonist</li><li>- Administered orally (tablet, liquid, wafer)</li><li>- Schedule II; can only be dispensed through federally certified opioid treatment programs and acute inpatient hospital settings for OUD treatment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Mu-opioid partial antagonist</li><li>- Administered sublingual, buccal, SQ extended release, subdermal implant</li><li>- Schedule III; requires waiver to prescribe outside of OTP</li></ul> <p>Implant: special training and Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) certification required.</p> <p>SQ: Healthcare settings and pharmacies must be certified in the Sublocade REMS Program and medication dispensed directly to provider for administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Mu-opioid antagonist</li><li>- Administered orally, IM extended release</li><li>- Not scheduled; not included in OTP regulations; requires prescription; office-based treatment or specialty substance use treatment programs, including OTPs</li></ul>

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# Why Methadone for OUD Treatment?

- ▶ Typically dosed once daily, because of the long half-life methadone stays in the body for up to 56 hours and reduces frequency in dosing throughout the day.
- ▶ Opioid receptor agonist
  - ▶ Effective in reducing/suppressing opioid withdrawals and cravings
  - ▶ Blunts or blocks euphoric effects of self-administered illicit opioid use through occupancy of the opioid receptor and cross-tolerance

# Benefits of Methadone Therapy

- ▶ Through clinical studies and research demonstrates to be medically safe and effective for long-term treatment when prescribed with strict program conditions and guidelines.
- ▶ Reduction or cessation of drug use.
- ▶ Reduction in overdose deaths
- ▶ Reduction in criminal behaviors.
- ▶ Reduction in the spread of communicable diseases (HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B).
- ▶ Demonstrated to be safe for use during pregnancy
- ▶ Cost effective, average of \$13/day.

# Adverse Reactions

- ▶ Adverse Reactions/Side Effects
  - ▶ Respiratory depression
  - ▶ Constipation
  - ▶ Excessive Sweating
  - ▶ QT Interval Prolongation
  - ▶ Weight Gain
  - ▶ Somnolence/Sedation
  - ▶ Decreased Libido/Sexual Function
  - ▶ Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

# Safety Considerations and Monitoring

- Alcohol, benzodiazepines and other CNS depressants increase risk of death.
- Approximately 5 days for plasma levels to reach steady state.
- Assessment of risk factors, including family history, patient history, medications, and methamphetamine and/or cocaine use prior to induction and throughout treatment.
- Daily dosing in clinic. Take-home medication based on federal guideline minimum 8-point phase up criteria.
- Routine monitoring through urine drug screening.



# Key Points

- Methadone is a safe and effective treatment option for OUD.
- Federally regulated and monitored.
- Treatment benefits the community.



# References

- *Medications for opioid use disorder: For healthcare and addiction professionals, policymakers, patients, and families.* (2019). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.
- *Medication-assisted treatment for opioid addiction in opioid treatment programs.* (n.d.). Rockville, MD: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.