

ALBERTA RURAL OPIOID DEPENDENCY PROGRAM

Patient FAQ'S

Q: How can I access the Rural Opioid Dependency Program?

A: Albertan residents who reside in communities without an opioid dependency program can access this service. Client visits are done using telehealth at local telehealth sites, which are available in most rural communities. Specific questions regarding Telehealth sites should be directed to the RODP office. For contact information for other opioid dependency clinics visit, <http://www.cpsa.ca/physician-prescribing-practices/methadone-program/methadone-clinics-alberta/>

Q: Do I need a physician referral?

A: You will need medical clearance from a physician or nurse practitioner to support intake into the program. Contact RODP staff who can send a form for your practitioner to fill out.

Q: Are my medication costs covered?

A: You are responsible for the cost of your medication. If you have health benefits, medications are covered under most plans.

Q. How would I be considered for the program?

A: Once your medical suitability form has been received, an RODP staff member will explain the program and answer your questions by phone. A urine sample and some lab tests may be required prior to the start of treatment. The physician will see you by Telehealth. In many cases treatment can start that day.

Q. How do the appointments work?

A: Appointments with the physician are done by videoconference at your local telehealth site. Other appointments with addiction counseling and nursing may be by telehealth or by phone call.

Q: How do I get my first dose?

A: You will start your medication as soon as it can be done safely following assessment by a physician. You will receive a supervised regular dose at a select pharmacy in your community or as close to your community as possible.

Q. After I start the program, what happens next?

A: The RODP team will work with you to ensure that you are progressing towards your recovery goals. Typically clients will get increased freedom with less trips to the pharmacy as they become clinically stable with negative urine drug tests, good communication with staff and in their clinical presentation at appointments.

Q: How long will I be on the medication?

A: Each patient will have an individualized treatment plan. Some clients aim to be off medication as soon as they feel stable. Others choose to stay on medication longer term due to improvements in their lives and how they feel with treatment.

Q: Can Opioid Replacement Therapy medication be used during pregnancy?

A: Yes. If you are pregnant it is safe to begin treatment for opioid dependency. Treatment is safer than using.

Q: What type of medication is used in the program?

A: The best medication is based on many factors. Consultation between the physician and patient will determine the most appropriate treatment and medication (i.e. Methadone, Suboxone, etc). The medication can be changed if medically necessary. Suboxone is much safer to start than methadone and is the preferred treatment by telehealth for that reason.

Q: Are there any negative drug interactions?

A: Consuming alcohol, other opioids, cocaine, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, tranquilizers, prescription drugs and/or other central nervous system depressants while in the treatment program can be potentially life threatening. Please discuss with program and/or pharmacy staff any medications or drug interactions you may be concerned about.

Q: What will happen if I stop taking my medications?

A: It is highly recommended that no doses are missed. You will experience opioid withdrawal and risk relapsing especially in initial stages of treatment. If doses are missed, you may need to be reassessed by a physician. Please let the program staff know if you have missed any doses.

Q: What happens if I am in the program and I am going out of town for a few days?

A: Please let program staff know of your plans at least two business days, so that arrangements can be made for you.

Q: Does RODP treat other addictions?

A: RODP is a specific treatment program for patients with opioid dependency. Program staff may refer you to other services such as counselling in your community.

Q: Is my personal information confidential? Will my family, employer, outside agencies be made aware that I am on medication assisted therapy?

A: Your information is confidential. RODP will not release your personal information without a signed consent, unless there is sufficient enough evidence to prove that another individual is at risk of harm, that you are at risk of self-harm, or your information is court ordered. Please note: The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta requires notification of all clients initiated on opioid dependency medication for prescription monitoring.

If you have any additional questions, please call 403-783-7688 or Toll Free 1-844-383-7688