



Drug Fact Sheet

Methadone

WHAT IS METHADONE?

Methadone is a synthetic (man-made) narcotic.

WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

German scientists synthesized methadone during World War II because of a shortage of morphine. Methadone was introduced into the United States in 1947 as an analgesic (Dolophine®).

What are common street names?

Common street names include:

- Amidone, Chocolate Chip Cookies, Fizzies with MDMA, and Wafer

What does it look like?

Methadone is available as a tablet, oral solution, or injectable liquid. Tablets are available in 5 mg and 10 mg formulations. As of January 1, 2008, manufacturers of methadone hydrochloride tablets 40 mg (dispersible) have voluntarily agreed to restrict distribution of this formulation to only those facilities authorized for detoxification and maintenance treatment of opioid addiction, and hospitals. Manufacturers will instruct their wholesale distributors to discontinue supplying this formulation to any facility not meeting the above criteria.

How is it used?

Methadone can be swallowed or injected.

What is its effect on the mind?

Misuse of methadone can lead to psychological dependence.

What is its effect on the body?

When an individual uses methadone, he/she may experience physical symptoms like sweating, itchy skin, or sleepiness. Individuals who misuse



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methadone risk becoming tolerant of and physically dependent on the drug.

When use is stopped, individuals may experience withdrawal symptoms including:

- Anxiety, muscle tremors, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal cramps

What are its overdose effects?

The effects of a methadone overdose are:

- Slow and shallow breathing, blue fingernails and lips, stomach spasms, clammy skin, convulsions, weak pulse, coma, and possible death

Which drugs cause similar effects?

Although chemically unlike morphine or heroin, methadone produces many of the same effects.

What is its legal status in the United States?

Methadone is a Schedule II narcotic under the Controlled Substances Act. While it may legally be used under a doctor's supervision, its nonmedical use is illegal.