

TAKEAWAYS

It takes a while before you are allowed even one takeaway dose a week and it can be a couple of years before you are allowed the maximum. Methadone and Suboxone have slightly different conditions placed on them in regards to takeaways and dosing. At a certain dose of suboxone you will have the option to dose every second or even every third day and this may mean at some point you will be able to dose and pick up enough to see you through the week. Methadone patients however need to dose every day and so even with the maximum of three takeaways per week you will still need to present at the pharmacy four days a week.

SUNDAYS & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Public holidays can be a drag if your pharmacy closes and some pharmacies may be closed on Sunday as well. It is worth taking the time to find out which days your pharmacy may be shutting down to avoid the sinking feeling of rocking up at the pharmacy to find out that it is closed for the day and you have nowhere else to dose.

TRAVEL

Travel while on a program can be difficult and is one of the main reasons that people stop their programs however between takeaways and dosing at pharmacies along the way it can totally be done. People have enjoyed lovely vacations in other countries or other states all that you need to do is visit your doctor as soon as you can and organise a dosing schedule and get scripts for the other pharmacies you need to dose at. Short term travel can often be covered by takeaways and with proof of travel it is possible to have up to a week of takeaways dispensed with your doctors authorisation.



TRAVEL CONT.

If you are having problems call us and we may be able to give you the info you need to get your show on the road. It is worth noting that other countries may have laws that prohibit the importation of methadone or suboxone. Always check what the legal status of travelling with medication is before you take your holiday.

EMERGENCIES

Occasionally emergencies will happen and you find yourself in a situation where you can't dose for whatever reason. The main thing is to stay calm. If you get wound up or emotional (as you most likely will feel like doing) then the help that is available will most likely disappear. If you take a deep breath and control the urge to collapse on the floor or shout out then you may find a way to resolve the problem and get dosed somewhere.

MAKING IT WORK-REALITY

If you want your opioid replacement experience to be a smooth, efficient and enjoyable transition to a more stable lifestyle then your best bet is to think ahead a bit. Make sure you make note of and attend your doctor's appointments and any days your pharmacy is closed. It can be handy to stick your appointment card to a doorframe or somewhere you will see it every day. If you keep a good relationship going with your doctor and the secretary or whoever is in charge of answering the phone then you stand a better chance of getting through any dramas that may come up. Once you have stabilised on whichever program you choose it does get a lot easier and if you weigh it up against the daily hunt for narcotics it really does give you much more time to pursue whatever it is that you want to do with your day.



**Opioid Replacement Pharmacotherapy
Advocacy and Complaints Service**



**NEED SOME HELP WITH YOUR
PRESCRIBER OR PHARMACIST?**

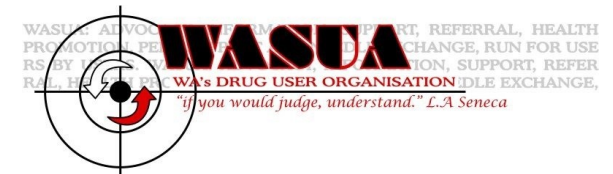
DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO?

CALL US...

Ph. 9325 8387

22/7 ABERDEEN STREET PERT

(NEAR McIVER TRAIN STATION)





WHAT IS ORPACS?

ORPACS is a helping hand for people who are on or looking at getting started with a methadone or suboxone program. If you are having trouble with some part of your program it can seem impossible to get your issues heard and many people fear that being seen to argue or stand out in any way will jeopardise their treatment. Everyone has the right to fair and complete medical care in this country and that most certainly includes people who are seeking help with drug issues. Having someone to help discuss your needs can make things a lot easier especially as having your dosage challenged or stopped can be incredibly emotional and stressful. If you are on a program or in any kind of rehabilitation or detox or looking at entering into anything along those lines and are having problems give us a call and we may be able to help you get things smoothed out.



HOW WE CAN HELP?

We work hard to keep a good relationship with pharmacies and prescribers and may be able to help with negotiations when you feel you are not able to anymore. We are here to help keep things running as smooth as possible for people experiencing methadone emergencies or a suboxone crisis.

GUIDELINES, RULES AND REGULATIONS

While there have been some tightening of conditions for people on programs lately a lot of the rules and regulations regarding prescription and dispensing of opioid replacements still seem open to interpretation by whoever is in charge. While this can be super frustrating many of these are legal requirements and if misinterpreted can be appealed. For instance if one prescriber says they don't trust you to manage your takeaways and they never will that is their right as prescribing doctor however there is nothing stopping you from seeing another doctor who's opinion of you may be vastly better. There is no shortage of horror stories out there and our main goal with ORPACS is to make sure you don't become one.

PRESCRIBERS AND CLINICS

People living in the city have choices when it comes to prescribers. You can choose to visit your public Drug and Alcohol Clinic or go to a private clinic. Both have their benefits and drawbacks and which is best for you is really personal choice. Private clinics will generally offer more leeway when it comes to urine testing and continuing other medications such as benzodiazepines that you may already be on however they will also quite often charge for missed appointments or phone consults. People living in rural areas may have less choice of providers however once stable you can always choose to travel to the city for your appointments as they will be less frequent.

PHARMACIES AND PHARMACISTS

There can be a certain amount of discrimination against people on methadone or suboxone. It can be frustrating watching and waiting while the pharmacist serves everyone else before taking the minute or so needed to dose you. Not all pharmacies are like this so finding the balance between how far you want to travel and the treatment you get when you arrive is usually the trick. It can be worth the extra 10 minutes on the bus or freeway if it means that you only have a couple minute wait and a pleasant experience at the end of it.



DISAGREEMENTS

If you do wind up in a conflict of wills it is worth remembering that very few of these disputes are won by arguing. Most people who have been on a program for any length of time have had at least one experience that involves taking a deep breath and taking what you can on the day and trying to resolve the situation at a later date. Perhaps with our help.