

Outline for Pharmacist–Dialogue on Take-Home Doses: Methadone

The first time take-home doses are dispensed, the pharmacist should discuss the appropriate use and storage of the medication with the patient, being sensitive to the individual patient's level of literacy. This discussion should be appropriately documented.

A written Take-Home (“Carry”) Agreement helps to ensure that precautionary measures and expectations are understood.

The pharmacist should emphasize the following points:

- Take-home doses are for the patient's consumption only and they should be consumed on the day specified on the label.
- Take-home doses must be kept secure and are the responsibility of the patient.
- Take-home doses are best stored in a locked box in a refrigerator, especially in households with children.
- When refrigeration is not available, an ice pack may be added to the locked box to keep the dose(s) cool.
- Methadone can kill a child or non-tolerant adult. As little as 10 mg can be fatal in children; a single day's maintenance dose of methadone (40–70 mg) can be lethal to non-tolerant adults
- Ingestion by anyone other than the patient should be considered a medical emergency, and emergency assistance (911) should be called immediately.
- If take-home doses are lost or stolen, police should be notified immediately by the patient to prevent possible harm to others.
- Misplaced, lost or stolen take-home doses are generally not replaced. As with any other narcotic, if any doses are replaced, a new prescription is required.
- Empty medication bottles should be returned to the pharmacy.

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