

## **I'm prescribed Methadone and pregnant what can I do?**

Discuss with your prescriber and midwife about the risks and benefits of taking this medication whilst pregnant. It is important that you continue to take your medication as prescribed until you have had this discussion. Reduction of methadone is possible only during the second trimester but needs to be planned and done slowly.

Reduction of methadone is not recommended during the third trimester because any opiate withdrawal, even if mild, is associated with foetal distress, stillbirth and adds risk of neonatal mortality.



## **What can you do..**

Do not just Stop! Contact one of the services below to discuss a carefully planned reduction

Together — 0800 233 5444

Your own GP

Midwife Team

Specialist Midwife

If you feel there is something seriously wrong with either yourself or the baby go to your nearest A & E or if not possible dial 999

**To protect your baby from Methadone related danger, you should tell your Prescriber and Recovery Worker as soon as you know your Pregnant.**

## **Methadone and Pregnancy**



## Benefits during pregnancy

Methadone treatment has been shown to significantly improve pregnancy outcomes for opiate dependent women.

### Benefits can include:

- Helps stabilise your use of drugs and your lifestyle
- Helps provide a stable environment in your body for your baby, which can improve the health and growth of your baby
- Reduces the risk of blood borne viral infections including Hepatitis B and C and HIV



## Methadone

Methadone is a prescribed substitute for heroin and other opiates such as morphine, pethidine or codeine. When you are on an appropriate dose of methadone, it stops you from having withdrawal symptoms and craving opiates.

### Can I just stop using Methadone while pregnant?

Simple answer is **No**

It's important to remember that Methadone can be continued during pregnancy because it carries a lower risk of harm to the foetus than just stopping

It is advised you talk with your prescriber and midwife before making any changes to your medication. Stopping an opioid medication suddenly ("cold turkey") could cause you to go into withdrawal.

**Suddenly stopping methadone should be avoided in pregnancy because it could cause a spontaneous miscarriage or premature labour.**

### Can I use Methadone and breastfeed?

Simple Answer is **Yes**

Breastfeeding for opioid dependent mums can reduce the risk of the infant developing NAS, requiring treatment and is strongly encouraged.

Methadone is excreted only in small amounts in breast milk and is considered safe for breast feeding.

If the baby is breastfed, your dose of methadone should be kept as low as possible and the baby should be monitored for sedation. High doses of methadone do carry an increased risk of sedation and respiratory depression.

You should not stop methadone if you are breastfeeding your baby.

**If the baby develops increased sleepiness, breathing difficulties, or limpness, You should seek medical help urgently and dial 999.**