

Nurse Practitioners Prescribing Methadone

Regulatory Guideline

Methadone is a controlled substance used for two clinical indications: opioid dependence treatment (ODT) and analgesia. Recent changes to the [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act \(CDSA\)](#) and [Narcotic Control Regulations \(NCR\)](#) removed the section 56(1) class exemption requirement for methadone. These changes authorize nurse practitioners (NPs) to prescribe this medication.

According to the [NP Standards of Practice](#), NPs who prescribe methadone are accountable to attain the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment to do so safely. Methadone courses differ depending on the clinical indication; therefore, NPs must complete education specific to the indication(s) for which they will be prescribing the medication. Options for education include, but are not limited to:

- Methadone for ODT ([Centre for Addictions and Mental Health \(CAMH\)'s Opioid Dependence Treatment Core Course](#))
- Methadone for analgesia ([Canadian Virtual Hospice's Methadone for Analgesia in Palliative Care](#))

Regardless of the clinical indication, NPs are accountable to base their methadone prescribing practice on current evidence-informed guidelines, best practice and employer policy related to educational requirements and prescribing methadone in their practice setting. They are also accountable to maintain their competence in methadone prescribing through a combination of self-reflection, continuing education activities and provision of care to clients requiring methadone as part of their treatment plan. Completing methadone education may be used as one learning goal of the learning plan as part of the annual Continuing Competence Program.

Please reach out to Lynn Miller at lmiller@crnns.ca or 902-491-9744 (ext. 228) if you have any questions.