



VIVITROL TREATMENT PROGRAM

INFORMATIONAL GUIDE

Vivitrol is a safe effective treatment method for opioid dependence.

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VIVITROL THERAPY

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS INFORMATION SHEET

1. **What is Vivitrol Therapy and why is it important?** We believe that the ultimate goal of any detoxification program is to have the patients on Vivitrol (also known as Naltrexone). Vivitrol is a pure narcotic antagonist, that is, it attaches to the endorphin or opiate receptors in the brain and completely blocks them. This means that if someone tries to use any kind of opiate while they Vivitrol is in the body, it is virtually impossible to relapse.
2. **Are there any risks or side effects?** There is some risk of taking the Vivitrol therapy before the detoxification is complete. If taken too early, Vivitrol will push people into complete withdrawal state and if the detoxification is not completely over, then there will be some withdrawal symptoms which can be severe. It is to be expected that patients will feel some withdrawal symptoms but the treatment program should minimize these.
3. **How long should I be on Vivitrol therapy?** We believe strongly that patients should be on Vivitrol therapy for at least 12 months. This prevents them from relapsing back to narcotic use and gives the patients a chance to start making changes in their lives and building up a support program
4. **What happens after detoxification?** We strongly believe that detoxification without appropriate follow-up and treatment is almost always unsuccessful. We insist that all of our patients be willing to participate in an appropriate treatment program as part of their aftercare including a 12-step program and therapy with a substance abuse treatment facility.

5. **What is the risk of overdosing following treatment?** Studies show that there have been patients who have died following periods of abstinence from narcotics. This appears to be caused by lack of tolerance following a period of abstinence. Vivitrol is extremely good at making people abstinent but when the Vivitrol wears off, patients have a very low tolerance which makes it easy to overdose which can be fatal. Patients need to understand this clearly and be extremely careful if they relapse back to narcotic use. The fatal overdoses have usually not happened on the first time of using so patients need to be very careful for at least the first month. It may also be possible to overdose if the patients try to override their Vivitrol therapy.