

New saliva test for buprenorphine and methadone

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Methadone



DrugWipe® 2 S BUP/MTD

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Addiction treatment and drug abuse – the two sides of buprenorphine and methadone

The active substances buprenorphine and methadone have been used successfully to treat drug addiction for many years. However, both substances are also abused as drugs. For this reason, Securetec developed the DrugWipe 2 S saliva test for buprenorphine and methadone.

While the oral administration of methadone and sublingual administration of buprenorphine satisfy the physical craving for opiates, thereby preventing withdrawal symptoms, the euphoric effects that addicts desire is blocked. To deliver a “kick”, the dose has to be increased or administered in a different form. This works because intravenous or nasal delivery produces higher blood concentrations in a shorter space of time than medically prescribed administration.

Infobox: Key benefits of the rapid screening test

- **Fast test results:** Results can be interpreted in 3 to 8 minutes max.
- **Hygienic:** Quick and easy sample collection
- **Flexible:** Screening anywhere, anytime
- **Reliable:** Tamper-resistant; reliable screening results even with a dry mouth



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	Methadone	Buprenorphine
Typical dose in replacement therapy	80–120 mg/day	4–24 mg/day
Dosage form	Drops or tablets	Usually sublingual (under the tongue) (e.g. Subutex®)
Effect	Calming, anxiety-reducing and sedative; similar to morphine but without the “kick”	Much weaker effect than morphine and non-sedative
Effective for	Up to 36 hours	Up to 72 hours
Risks	Overdose may cause death due to respiratory arrest	Low risk of respiratory arrest due to overdose
Acceptance/chances of successful treatment	Higher degree of acceptance than buprenorphine among patients with a long history of dependency	Low sedative effect has benefits for younger patients/those integrated into society and the workforce

A comparison of the properties of buprenorphine and methadone

Ready availability of both substances on the black market facilitates their abuse. For example, 59 kg of illegal methadone were seized and there were 3533 seizures of buprenorphine in Europe in 2020¹. In 2019, Hamburg customs investigators reported a huge haul, in which they seized Subutex® tablets with a value of 1 million euros. The tablets were en route to Scandinavia from France. In contrast to Germany and the Scandinavian countries, the legislation on narcotics in France does not cover Subutex®. It is relatively easy to buy from pharmacies there and costs just 1 or 2 euros per tablet. Germany and Scandinavia are attractive markets for sales. Black market prices here can sometimes exceed 30 euros per tablet.

See for yourself – give the DrugWipe 2 S a test run.

¹EMCDDA, www.emcdda.europa.eu/data/stats2022/szr_en, Oktober 2022



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