

SHOCKING CLAIM

DIXIE CHICK BATTLING SECRET DRUG ADDICTION

By **ROBIN MIZRAHI**

DIXIE CHICKS lead singer Natalie Maines secretly battled a frightening drug addiction – but the spunky country music star is successfully beating her dependency through a groundbreaking medical technique called “blood cleansing,” say sources.

The 31-year-old entertainer became addicted to hydrocodone – commonly known as Vicodin or Norco – after doctors prescribed it to her following a minor wrist injury six months ago, *The ENQUIRER* has learned.

“Unfortunately, Natalie continued taking the highly addictive painkiller after her wrist had healed,” said a source close to the singer.

Friends say Natalie’s behavior changed drastically and that she became a “nightmare to deal with.”

“She was constantly flying off the handle and yelling at the slightest provocation,” said the source.

“It even affected the girls’ performances – it threw off their chemistry.”

According to the source, Natalie was losing her focus during rehearsals, disappearing in the middle of the day to sleep and throwing temper tantrums.

“Everyone started noticing that she was taking more and more pills and getting desperate when she was close to running out,” continued the source.

“In one two-week period, she went through at least 100 pills.

“On tour, she would call doctors in different cities, trying to get a prescription. She’d also ask around, seeing who else had a prescription, then ask for a handful.

“It got to the point that she wasn’t even discreet about it – and that’s when everyone got together and told her she was an addict and needed to do something about it.”

Friends and handlers staged an intervention, and at first Natalie insisted she could handle the problem on her own.



Natalie is trying to get off painkillers, say sources

BLOOD CLEANSING TREATMENT HELPS NATALIE MAINES
– SAYS SOURCE



“But it soon became clear to her that she needed professional help – and to her credit, she got it,” said the source.

Natalie’s rep denied that she had become addicted to painkillers. However, *The ENQUIRER* has learned that Natalie consulted Dr. Stuart Finkelstein, an internal medicine physician in Southern California who uses a new pharmacological innovation called Suboxone, which allows patients to detox on an out-patient basis. Approved by the FDA in 2000, Suboxone is one of the first addiction-fighting drugs that can be prescribed and administered from a doctor’s office. The doctor gave Natalie a prescription for the Suboxone tablets, which dissolve under the tongue and reduce the symptoms of opiate dependence, said the source.

“Natalie needs to be monitored regularly, and she needs to continue taking the Suboxone for a month or longer.

“The drug cleanses her blood of the painkillers, and she seems to be going through her withdrawal without much discomfort,” said the source.

As part of the detox program, Natalie is required to undergo intense psychological counseling.

“Natalie agreed to do that,” said the source, “and we’re all praying that she continues her therapy sessions and stays clean.”