



# Buprenorphine

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**Assess Opioid Withdrawal Signs and Symptoms:**  
Patient **MUST** present with **≥ 2 objective signs** to be considered for buprenorphine treatment

**Objective Signs:**

- Tachycardia
- Diaphoresis
- Restlessness and/or agitation
- Dilated pupils
- Rhinorrhea or lacrimation
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Yawning
- Piloerection

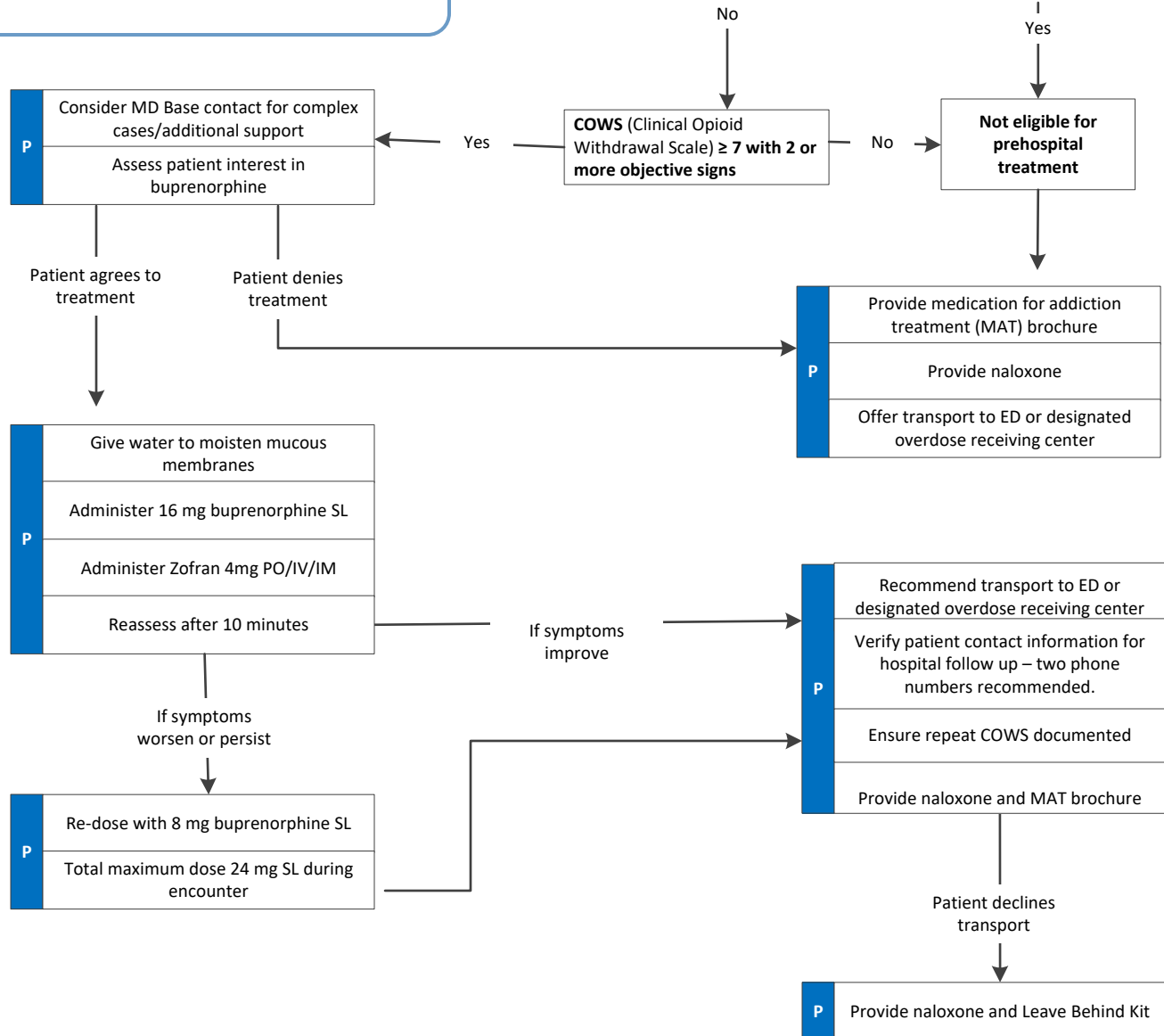
**Subjective Symptoms:**

- Nausea
- Stomach / abdominal cramps
- Body aches
- Achy bones / joints
- Restlessness
- Hot and Cold
- Nasal congestion

Confirm Opioid withdrawal, then assess for exclusion criteria

**Assess for Exclusion Criteria:**

- Under 16 years of age
- Any methadone use within last 10 days
- Altered mental status and unable to give consent
- Severe medical illness (sepsis, respiratory distress, etc.)
- Current intoxication or recent use of benzodiazepine, alcohol, or other intoxicants suspected
- No clinical opioid use disorder symptoms
- Unable to comprehend potential risks and benefits for any reason
- Not a candidate for buprenorphine treatment for any reason



Adult Medical Treatment Guidelines





# Buprenorphine

## **COWS** Wesson & Ling, J Psychoactive Drugs. 2003 Apr-Jun;35(2):253-9. **Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale**

Resting Pulse Rate: _____ beats/minute <i>Measured after patient is sitting or lying for one minute</i> 0 Pulse rate 80 or below 1 Pulse rate 81-100 2 Pulse rate 101-120 4 Pulse rate greater than 120	GI Upset: <i>over last 1/2 hour</i> 0 No GI symptoms 1 Stomach cramps 2 Nausea or loose stool 3 Vomiting or diarrhea 5 Multiple episodes of diarrhea or vomiting
Sweating: <i>over past 1/2 hour not accounted for by room temperature or patient activity.</i> 0 No report of chills or flushing 1 Subjective report of chills or flushing 2 Flushed or observable moistness on face 3 Beads of sweat on brow or face 4 Sweat streaming off face	Tremor <i>observation of outstretched hands</i> 0 No tremor 1 Tremor can be felt, but not observed 2 Slight tremor observable 4 Gross tremor or muscle twitching
Restlessness <i>Observation during assessment</i> 0 Able to sit still 1 Reports difficulty sitting still, but is able to do so 3 Frequent shifting or extraneous movements of legs/arms 5 Unable to sit still for more than a few seconds	Yawning <i>Observation during assessment</i> 0 No yawning 1 Yawning once or twice during assessment 2 Yawning three or more times during assessment 4 Yawning several times/minute
Pupil size 0 Pupils pinned or normal size for room light 1 Pupils possibly larger than normal for room light 2 Pupils moderately dilated 5 Pupils so dilated that only the rim of the iris is visible	Anxiety or irritability 0 None 1 Patient reports increasing irritability or anxiousness 2 Patient obviously irritable anxious 4 Patient so irritable or anxious that participation in the assessment is difficult
Bone or Joint aches <i>If patient was having pain previously, only the additional component attributed to opiates withdrawal is scored</i> 0 Not present 1 Mild diffuse discomfort 2 Patient reports severe diffuse aching of joints/ muscles 4 Patient is rubbing joints or muscles and is unable to sit still because of discomfort	Gooseflesh skin 0 Skin is smooth 3 Piloerection of skin can be felt or hairs standing up on arms 5 Prominent piloerection
Runny nose or tearing <i>Not accounted for by cold symptoms or allergies</i> 0 Not present 1 Nasal stuffiness or unusually moist eyes 2 Nose running or tearing 4 Nose constantly running or tears streaming down cheeks	Total Score _____ The total score is the sum of all 11 items Initials of person completing Assessment: _____

Score: 5-12 mild; 13-24 moderate; 25-36 moderately severe; more than 36 = severe withdrawal

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### Pearls

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