OPIOID MANAGER

SWITCHING OPIOIDS

- Opioid withdrawal symptoms are unpleasant, but not life-threatening. What is life-threatening with opioids is overdose. So remember, it is safer to underdose. Be careful during pregnancy, because severe acute withdrawal has been associated with premature labour and spontaneous abortion.
- After switching, it is important to warn the patient (and relative or friends) about signs of overdose: slurred or drawing speech, emotional lability, ataxia, “noodling off” during conversation or activity.
- Consider a 3-day “tolerance check.” Contact the patient 3 days after starting the new opioid to check for signs of over-sedation and to ensure that pain relief is at least comparable to the pre-switch treatment.
- Patients at higher risk of overdose include: elderly, on benzodiazepines, renal or hepatic impairment, COPD, sleep apnea, sleep disorders and cognitive impaired.
- These doses are approximations due to inter-individual variation.

The form below is designed to guide the provider in switching from one opioid to another using the table of morphine equivalent suggested by the guideline. A copy of the completed form may be given to the patient and should be sent to the pharmacist.

Switching Opioid Form

Patient name: ____________________________ Today’s date: __________/________/________

Switching from ____________________________ to ____________________________

Start switching on Monday: __________/________/________ (mm/dd/yy)

Current opioid(s) regimen:

• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________
• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________
• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________

Current total daily dose of opioid: ____________________________/day

Switching from current opioid to morphine equivalent:

Morphine to morphine: multiply by 1
Oxycodone to morphine: multiply by 1.5
Hydromorphone to morphine: multiply by 5

Current morphine equivalence dose: ____________________________/day

Proportion of the initial daily dose that will be switched to the new opioid: ( ) 50% ( ) 60% ( ) 75% ( ) other: ____________________________

Total morphine equivalents that will be switched to the new regimen: ____________________________/day

Switching from morphine equivalent to the new opioid:

Morphine equivalent to morphine: multiply by 1
Morphine equivalent to oxycodone: multiply by 0.667
Morphine equivalent to hydromorphone: multiply by 0.2

From morphine equivalent to the new opioid: The total daily dose of the new opioid is: ____________________________/day

New opioid regimen:

• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________
• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________
• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________

Comments: ____________________________

For questions, please call Dr. ____________________________ Phone number: ____________________________

Morphine Equivalence Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opioid (Oral Dose)</th>
<th>Equivalent Doses (mg)</th>
<th>Conversion to MEQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morphine</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codeine</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxycodone</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydromorphone</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meperidine</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadone &amp; Buprenorphine</td>
<td>Dose Equivalents unavailable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Switching Opioids:

If previous opioid dose was: Then, SUGGESTED new opioid dose is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate or low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-100% of the previous opioid (converted to morphine equivalent)</td>
<td>50% or less of previous opioid (converted to morphine equivalent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Opioid with dry symptoms are unpleasant but not life-threatening. What is life-threatening with opioids is overdose. So remember, it is safer to underdose. Be careful during pregnancy, because severe acute withdrawal has been associated with premature labour and spontaneous abortion.

Switching from current opioid to morphine equivalent:

Morphine to morphine: multiply by 1
Oxycodone to morphine: multiply by 1.5
Hydromorphone to morphine: multiply by 5

Current morphine equivalence dose: ____________________________/day

Proportion of the initial daily dose that will be switched to the new opioid: ( ) 50% ( ) 60% ( ) 75% ( ) other: ____________________________

Total morphine equivalents that will be switched to the new regimen: ____________________________/day

Switching from morphine equivalent to the new opioid:

Morphine equivalent to morphine: multiply by 1
Morphine equivalent to oxycodone: multiply by 0.667
Morphine equivalent to hydromorphone: multiply by 0.2

From morphine equivalent to the new opioid: The total daily dose of the new opioid is: ____________________________/day

New opioid regimen:

• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________
• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________
• Opioid name, dose and frequency: ____________________________

Comments: ____________________________

For questions, please call Dr. ____________________________ Phone number: ____________________________

To access the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Non Chronic Cancer Pain and to download the Opioid Manager visit http://nationalpaincentre.mcmaster.ca/opioid/