

**THE NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
CENTRE ON SUBSTANCE USE**

Update: Initiation of Suboxone for Inpatients at NLHS

Eastern Urban Zone

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Goals

- Anyone admitted to any inpatient unit can be initiated
- Simple, easy to follow
- To help empower our staff
- Ensure access to follow-up care is in place
- Evidence-based

Our Policy

- There are several initiation methods that may be used for buprenorphine-naloxone. This policy uses the traditional initiation method only.
- Patients admitted to inpatient units who self-identify or are identified by the treatment team as meeting criteria for an opioid use disorder diagnosis will be considered for buprenorphine-naloxone initiation.
- Before initiation, the prescriber must arrange a community OAT prescriber and dispensing OAT pharmacy.

Labs & Diagnostics

Lab Investigations:

Note: Do not delay treatment while waiting for investigations

- ☐ CBC
- ☐ Creatinine
- ☐ Liver Function Tests (HEPFUP)
- ☐ Blood Alcohol Level
- ☐ Electrolytes
- ☐ Urine Drug Screen
- ☐ Urine Pregnancy Test (HCGU)

Consider:

- ☐ Sexually Transmitted/Blood Borne Infections Screen (HEPDX, TPALAB, CTNGPU, CTBGDP, HBSAB, and HIVS)
- ☐ Patient consent obtained for Hepatitis B and C, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia and HIV testing.

Consent obtained by _____ on _____

Other: _____

Diagnostics:

Note: Do not delay treatment while waiting for investigation

- ☐ ECG

Other: _____

Medication Options

Medications:

Choose one:

☐ Buprenorphine-Naloxone **Tablets** **OR** ☐ Buprenorphine-Naloxone **Film**

- Dispense for dose titration on Days 1 to 3:
 - 5 X 8 mg/4 mg tablets or films
 - 16 X 2 mg/0.5 mg tablets or films

Day 1

Initiation Day 1:

Maximum total dose on Day 1 is Buprenorphine 16 mg - Naloxone 4 mg.

Administer Initial Dose when COWS greater than 12:

☐ Buprenorphine 4 mg - Naloxone 1 mg SL once

OR

☐ Buprenorphine 2 mg - Naloxone 0.5 mg SL once (consider if age 65 or older, on benzodiazepines or unsure of last opioid use)

Repeat COWS score in one hour after initial dose:

- If COWS increased by 2 or more after initial dose (precipitated withdrawal), contact prescriber for further direction.

OR

- If COWS unchanged/decreased, continue with initiation.

Subsequent Doses on Day 1:

- Repeat COWS Q4H while awake and PRN if patient reports worsening withdrawal symptoms:
 - If COWS less than 7, do not administer subsequent dose.
 - If COWS score between 7 and 12, administer buprenorphine 2 mg - naloxone 0.5 mg SL once.
 - If COWS greater than 12, administer buprenorphine 4 mg - naloxone 1 mg SL once.

If maximum dose reached (buprenorphine 16 mg - naloxone 4 mg) and patient showing symptoms of ongoing/worsening withdrawal, contact prescriber.

If improvement of symptoms, continue with initiation Day 2.

Day 2

Initiation Day 2

Maximum total dose on Day 2 is Buprenorphine 20 mg - Naloxone 5 mg

Initial Dose on Day 2:

- Complete COWS prior to morning buprenorphine-naloxone dose.
 - If COWS less than 7 give total amount buprenorphine - naloxone administered on Day 1 as a single SL dose in AM.
 - If COWS greater than or equal to 7 give total amount administered on Day 1 plus an additional buprenorphine 4 mg - naloxone 1 mg SL as a single dose in AM.

Subsequent Doses on Day 2:

- Repeat COWS Q4H while awake and PRN if patient reports worsening withdrawal symptoms:
 - If COWS less than 7, do not administer subsequent dose.
 - If COWS score between 7 and 12, administer buprenorphine 2 mg - naloxone 0.5 mg SL once.
 - If COWS greater than 12, administer buprenorphine 4 mg - naloxone 1 mg SL once.

If maximum dose reached (buprenorphine 20 mg - naloxone 5 mg) and patient showing symptoms of ongoing/worsening withdrawal, contact prescriber.

If improvement of symptoms, continue with initiation on Day 3.

Treatment of Withdrawal Symptoms

Pain Management:

- ☐ Acetaminophen 650 mg PO QID PRN
- ☐ Ibuprofen 400 mg PO TID PRN (caution with lithium)

Sleep Management:

- ☐ Melatonin 3 mg PO HS PRN
- ☐ Trazodone 50 mg PO HS PRN
- ☐ Other: _____

Avoid initiation of benzodiazepines during initiation

Nausea Management:

- ☐ Ginger Graviol 2 tablets PO TID PRN
- ☐ Dimenhydrinate 50 mg PO Q4H PRN

Diarrhea Management:

- ☐ Loperamide 4 mg PO X 1 dose with first loose bowel movement, followed by 2 mg PO PRN after each loose bowel movement to a maximum of 16 mg per day

Other:

☐ _____

THANK YOU!

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- Many more!!

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Thank you!

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Any Questions?