Adjunct Medications for Opioid Withdrawal and Multi-modal Pain Management

Ask the patient which symptoms are most distressing and treat those first.

General Population (Adults and Youth)

Dosing is the same for adults and youth >43 kg. Look up appropriate dosing for patients <43 kg.

Opioid Withdrawal (Generalized)

- Clonidine 0.1-0.2 mg PO every hour as needed, up to 4 doses
- Tizanidine 2 mg PO every 4 hours, either scheduled or as needed

Agitation or Anxiety

- Clonidine 0.1-0.2 mg PO every hour as needed, up to 4 doses
- Hydroxyzine 25-50 mg PO every 6 hours as needed
- Olanzapine 5-10 mg PO or IM once
- Ziprasidone 10-20 mg PO or IM once
- Haloperidol 2.5-5 mg PO, IV or IM once
- Lorazepam 1-2 mg PO, IV or IM every 4-6 hours as needed

Nausea

- Ondansetron 4-8 mg PO or IV every 4-8 hours as needed
- Prochlorperazine 5-10 mg PO or IV every 6-8 hours as needed
- Metoclopramide 10 mg PO or IV every 4-6 hours as needed

Abdominal Cramping

- Dicyclomine 20 mg PO every 6 hours as needed

Pain

- Gabapentin 300 mg PO every 8 hours, may titrate up to 900 mg every 8 hours
- Ketamine 0.1-0.3 mg/kg IV every 30 minutes as needed
- Acetaminophen 325-650 mg PO or IV every 4-6 hours as needed
- Ibuprofen 600-800 mg PO every 6-8 hours as needed
- Ketorolac 15 mg IV or 30 mg IM once

Insomnia

- Trazodone 50-150 mg before bed as needed

Muscle spasms:

- Cyclobenzaprine 10 mg every 8 hours as needed

Considerations

The following are medication options. Use clinical judgment to select agents appropriate to each patient's clinical presentation, comorbidities, and contraindications. Weigh risk/benefit.

Clonidine and tizanidine treat generalized opioid withdrawal (restlessness, anxiety, tachycardia, hypertension, tremor, diaphoresis). **One of these agents is recommended as first-line therapy; do not give both.**

Some medications have multiple indications. Treating the most distressing symptoms first may resolve others, reducing the total number of agents required.

Use caution when giving the patient multiple different medications that can suppress respiratory drive.

Medications used to sedate an agitated patient or keep them from behavior that poses harm to themselves, or others, may be considered a chemical restraint.

Pregnant Individuals

Opioid Withdrawal, Hypertension or Tachycardia

- Tizanidine 2 mg PO every 4 hours, either scheduled or as needed

Agitation or Anxiety

- Tizanidine 2 mg PO every 4 hours, either scheduled or as needed
- Gabapentin 300 mg PO every 4 hours as needed
- Diphenhydramine 25 mg PO or IV. May repeat x1 in 30 minutes for total dose of 50 mg PO, then 25-50 mg PO or IV every 6 hours as needed
- Hydroxyzine 50 mg PO every 6 hours as needed
- Olanzapine 5 to 10 mg PO or IM once

Nausea

- Doxylamine 10-20 mg PO every 8 hours as needed
- Ondansetron 4 mg PO every 6 hours as needed

Abdominal Cramping

- Dicyclomine 20 mg PO every 4-6 hours as needed
- Loperamide 4 mg PO once, then 2 mg PO every 4 hours as needed. Maximum 8 mg PO

Pain

- Acetaminophen 650 mg PO or IV every 4-6 hours as needed

Insomnia

- Trazodone 50-150 mg PO before bed as needed

Muscle spasms

- Cyclobenzaprine 10 mg PO every 8 hours as needed

Considerations

Weigh risk/benefit for any medication given to a pregnant/lactating patient.

Lactating Individuals

Opioid Withdrawal, Hypertension or Tachycardia

- Tizanidine 2 mg PO every 4 hours either scheduled or as needed

Agitation or Anxiety

- Gabapentin 300 mg PO every 4 hours as needed

Nausea

- Ondansetron 4 mg PO or IV every 6 hours as needed
- Doxylamine 10-20 mg PO every 8 hours as needed
  - Second line option; large doses may affect milk supply

Insomnia

- Trazodone 50-150 mg PO before bed as needed

Muscle spasms

- Cyclobenzaprine 10 mg PO every 8 hours as needed

Pain

- Acetaminophen 650 mg PO or IV every 4-6 hours as needed

Considerations

Weigh risk/benefit for any medication given to a pregnant/lactating patient.

Prescriptions for home

- Clonidine 0.1 to 0.2 mg PO 3 times a day as needed for anxiety restlessness, sweating, fast heart rate, shakiness, quantity #30
- Hydroxyzine 25-50 mg PO every 6 hours as needed for anxiety, itching, tearing & runny nose, quantity #30
- Ondansetron 8 mg PO 3 times a day as needed for nausea, quantity #15
- Loperamide 2 mg PO every 4 hours as needed for diarrhea, quantity #30
- Acetaminophen 500 mg PO 2 tablets every 6 hours for pain or discomfort, quantity #30
- Ibuprofen 400 mg PO 1-2 tablets every 8 hours as needed for muscle aches, joint pain, headaches, quantity #15
- Trazodone 50 mg PO 1- 3 tablets before bed as needed for insomnia, quantity #30
- Cyclobenzaprine 10 mg PO 3 times a day as needed for muscle spasms, quantity #15

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