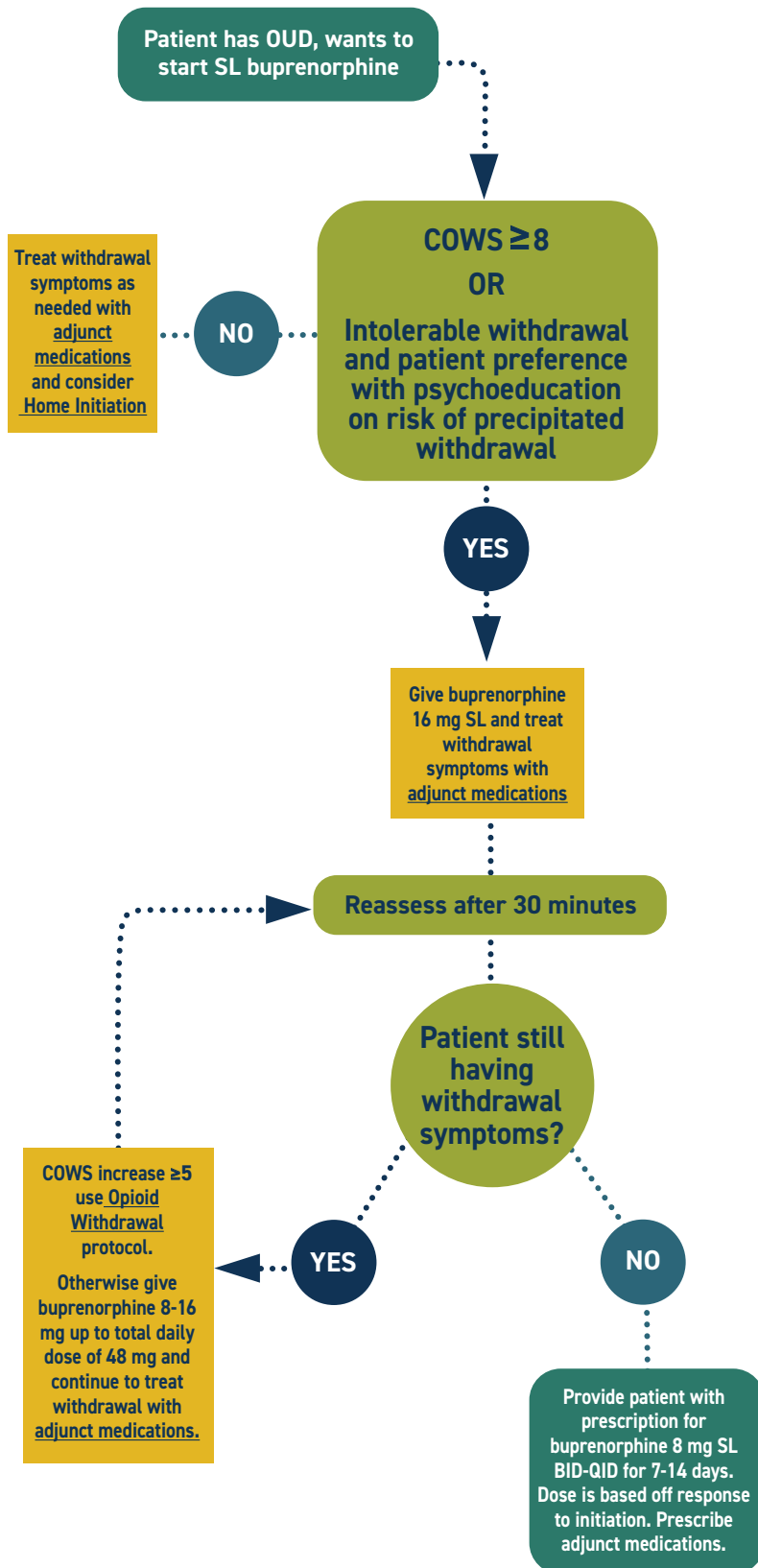


## Buprenorphine Initiation



### Considerations

Higher doses of buprenorphine have been found to be very safe in the adult population and lower the risk of precipitated withdrawal.

The lower the COWS score the higher the risk of precipitated withdrawal. Active stimulant intoxication can falsely elevate the COWS score. The use of buprenorphine can unmask symptoms of stimulant intoxication.

Providers should engage in shared decision making with the patient.

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Potential complicating factors include:

- Allergy or sensitivity
- Severe respiratory compromise
- Chronic use of long acting opioids (e.g., methadone or oxycontin)

Consider expert consultation, but prioritize treating symptoms.

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Consider screening for HIV, HCV, STIs, and mental health comorbidities. Link to ongoing care as needed.

### Program partners