

# Palliative Care Symptom Guide

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# Assessment of Pain

**For Patients Who Can Communicate:** Consider the acronym: “PQRSTUV”:

<b>P: Precipitating</b> (and Alleviating) <b>Factors</b>	“What makes the pain better/worse?”
<b>Q: Quality</b>	“How would you describe the pain?”
<b>R: Region or Radiating</b>	“Where is the pain? Does it go anywhere?”
<b>S: Severity</b>	“What is the pain (on a scale of 0 -> 10) – now/at best/at worse/on average?” *Must ask: “What level of pain is acceptable or tolerable?!”
<b>T: Time and Temporal</b>	“When did the pain start? How does it change throughout the day?”
<b>U: previous Utilization</b>	“What have you used previously?”
<b>V: Values</b>	“How is this pain inhibiting your daily life?”

**For Patients Who Are Cognitively Impaired, or Cannot Communicate:**

e.g.: Pain Assessment in Advanced Dementia (PAIN-AD) Scale:

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Parameter:	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
<b>Breathing</b> Independent of Vocalization	Normal	Occasional labored breathing. Short period of hyperventilation	Noisy, labored breathing. Long period of hyperventilation. Cheyne-stokes respirations
<b>Negative Vocalization</b>	None	Occasional moan or groan. Low level speech with negative or disapproving quality	Repeated troubled calling out. Loud moaning or groaning. Crying
<b>Facial Expression</b>	Smiling or inexpressive	Sad, frightened or frowning	Facial grimacing
<b>Body Language</b>	Relaxed	Tense, distressed pacing, or fidgeting	Rigid. Fists clenched, knees pulled up. Pulling or pushing away. Striking out
<b>Consolability</b>	No need to console	Distracted or reassured by voice or touch	Unable to console, distract, or reassure
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<i>Provides Approx. Severity Score:</i> 0-3: Mild Pain; 4-7: Moderate Pain; 8-10: Severe Pain

References: Chalkley AJ, Mulhall DJ. The PQRSTUV: The Personal Questionnaire Rapid Scaling Technique. Br J Clin Psychol. 1991 May;30 ( Pt 2):181-3. Warden V, Hurley AC, Volicer L. Development and psychometric evaluation of the Pain Assessment in Advanced Dementia (PAINAD) scale. J Am Med Dir Assoc. 2003 Jan-Feb;4(1):9-15.

# Adjuvant and Non-Opioid Agents for Pain

## Based on Perceived Etiology of Pain:

	Class or Drug	Starting Dose/Route	Maximum Daily Dose (MDD) and Duration	Comments	
Nociceptive Pain	APAP	650mg PO/PR q4h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDD: 3-4,000mg; 2,000mg/day for those with hepatic impairment</li> <li>IV Duration: ≤2 doses per UPMC policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks anti-inflammatory effects of NSAIDs</li> <li>Avoid in severe hepatic disease</li> </ul>	
		1000mg IV q6h			
	NSAIDs	Ibuprofen 400mg PO q8h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDD: 3,200mg</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caution in patients with gastric disease, renal impairment, decompensated heart failure, or at risk for bleeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid use in severe hepatic and renal impairment</li> </ul>
		Naproxen 250mg PO q12h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDD: 1,250mg</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CrCl &lt;30mL/min: use is not recommended</li> <li>Use lowest possible dose in advanced liver disease</li> </ul>
Ketorolac 15-30mg IM/IV q6h		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDD: 120mg. Elderly, renally impaired, and/or weight &lt;50kg/dose = 10-15mg IM/IV</li> <li>Max Therapeutic Duration: 3-5 days</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use caution in hepatic impairment</li> </ul>		
Neuropathic Pain	Anti-epileptics	Gabapentin 300mg PO HS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDD: 3,600mg</li> <li>No additional benefit seen &gt;1800mg/day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce dose in renal insufficiency (CrCl &lt;60mL/min)</li> <li>Post-dialysis supplementation dose recommended</li> </ul>	
	SNRIs	Venlafaxine 37.5mg XR PO once daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDD: 300mg/day</li> <li>No additional benefit seen &gt;150mg/day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce dose in mild and moderate renal insufficiency</li> <li>Avoid in severe renal and hepatic insufficiency</li> </ul>	
		Duloxetine 30mg PO once daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDD: 90mg/day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid in severe renal insufficiency</li> <li>Contraindicated in hepatic insufficiency</li> </ul>	

# Principles of Opioid Therapy

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## Initiating Opioids:

<b>Appropriate?</b>	Are opioids appropriate for the patient's specific pain(s)? <i>Some types of pains do not respond well to opioids</i>  Always screen patients for risk factors for opioid misuse upon initiation of opioid therapy. <i>Must check PA PDMP*</i> Can also consider utilizing the <a href="#">Opioid Risk Tool</a> (ORT)
<b>Adjuvants?</b>	Adjuvants should always be considered for pain. <i>See slide 2 for more information</i>

## Throughout Opioid Therapy: Monitor for the 4As

<b>Analgesia</b>	Has the current medication regimen improved the patient's pain scores?
<b>Activity</b>	What is the patient's specific goal? <i>This may not be just a reduction in severity. Consider functional goals as well</i>
<b>ADRs</b>	Is the patient experiencing any opioid-induced effects? <i>Must ask the patient about each potential effect individually</i>
<b>Abuse</b>	<p>Screen for abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal or family history of alcohol, tobacco or substance abuse</li> <li>• Younger age (less than 35 years of age)</li> <li>• Psychiatric disease such as anxiety, bipolar disorder, PTSD; particularly if uncontrolled</li> </ul> <p>Red flags suggesting opioid misuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking for specific opioid medication/formulation/brand, or for early refills or early prescriptions; inability to control use; inappropriate urine drug screen results (negative for prescribed substances or positive for non-prescribed substances)</li> <li>• Receiving prescriptions from different providers* <i>Must check PA-PDMP prior to every opioid prescription</i></li> </ul> <p>* Pennsylvania PDMP website: <a href="https://pennsylvania.pmpaware.net/login">https://pennsylvania.pmpaware.net/login</a></p>

# Principles of Opioid Therapy (cont.)

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## Initiating Opioids:

1. Determine **drug**:
  - Morphine is considered first-line therapy. Consider for all patients (except for renal failure and true allergy)
2. Determine **dose**:
  - Start low and go slow
  - Be aware of commercially available oral formulations
3. Determine **route**:
  - PO route is preferred. IM route is not recommended
4. Determine **frequency**:
  - Never use long-acting opioids to control acute pain
  - For opioid naïve patients, only prescribe short-acting agents as needed (PRN)

## Titrating Opioids:

- Titrate no faster than every 24 hours
- First, calculate previous 24 hour OME total
- If response is inadequate consider increasing 25-50% for moderate pain and 50-100% for severe pain
- If adding a long-acting agent: Give 66% of total OME as long-acting. Give 10-15% of total daily long-acting agent OME as short acting breakthrough agent (PRN).  
Recommended interval for breakthrough dose is 3-4hours.

## Rotating Opioids:

Primary reasons to rotate opioids are: presence of intolerable ADR or drug allergy and/or renal failure, and insurance coverage and/or cost issues

## Converting Opioids:

1. Assess patient
2. Determine total daily dose of opioid
3. Decide new opioid and route; consult equianalgesic table and calculate new opioid dose

$$\frac{\text{mg of current opioid (& form)}}{\text{Equivalent mg current opioid (& form)}} = \frac{\text{"X" mg of new opioid (& form)}}{\text{Equivalent mg new opioid (& form)}}$$

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- Consider cross-tolerance when rotating to a different opioid (reduce new dose by 25-50%)
- 4. Individualize based on assessment and monitor

## Tapering Opioids:

- Reduce opioid dose 20-50% each week
- Once at the lowest commercially available formulation, either increase the interval between doses or reduce the dose every 2-5 days
  - As long as 25% of the previous steady-state dose is administered, the patient should not experience withdrawal

# Select Opioid Products

## COMMONLY AVAILABLE ORAL OPIOID FORMULATIONS\*

\*Not all inclusive. Check with pharmacy for availability, and patient's insurance for coverage

Opioid	Short Acting (mg)	Long Acting (mg)
Morphine	Tabs (15, 30) <b>MSIR®</b> Oral Solution (10mg/5mL, 20mg/5mL, 20mg/mL) §	<b>MSContin®</b> Tabs (15, 30, 60, 100, 200) <b>Kadian®</b> Caps (10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 80, 100, 200) <b>Avinza®</b> Caps (30, 45, 60, 75, 90, 120) <b>MorphaBond ER®</b> Tabs (15, 30, 60, 100)
Oxycodone	<b>Roxicodone®</b> , Tabs (5,10,15,30) <b>Roxicodone®</b> Oral Solution (5mg/mL) <b>RoxyBond®</b> Tabs (15, 30) <b>OxyFAST®, Oxydose®, Roxicodone® Intensol</b> Oral Concentrate (20mg/mL) § <b>Endocet®, Percocet®</b> Tabs (oxycodone/APAP) (2.5/325, 5/325, 7.5/325, 10/325)	<b>OxyContin®</b> Tabs (10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 60, 80) <b>Xtampza ER®</b> Caps (9, 13.5, 18, 27, 36)
Hydromorphone	<b>Dilaudid®</b> Tabs (2, 4, 8) <b>Dilaudid®</b> Oral Solution (1mg/5mL, 1mg/mL) §	<b>Exalgo®</b> Tabs (8, 12, 16, 32)
Oxymorphone	<b>Opana®</b> Tabs (5, 10)	Oxymorphone ER Tabs (5, 7.5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40)
Fentanyl	☞	<b>Duragesic®</b> Transdermal Patch (12, 25, 37.5, 50, 75, 100mcg/hr)
Codeine	Tabs (15,30)	
Tramadol	<b>Ultram®</b> Tabs (50)	<b>Ultram ER®</b> Tabs (100, 150, 200, 300)
Tapentadol	<b>Nucynta®</b> Tabs (50, 75, 100)	<b>Nucynta ER®</b> Tabs (50, 100, 150, 200, 250)
Hydrocodone	<b>Vicodin®, Lortab®</b> Tabs (hydrocodone/APAP) (5/325, 7.5/325, 10/325)	<b>Hysingla ER®</b> Tabs (20, 30, 40, 60, 80, 100, 120) <b>Zohydro ER®</b> Tabs (10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50)

**Brand Name;** Generic Name – most opioid preparations have generic formulations

§: orders for oral solutions must include drug name and strength (in mg/mL) to avoid confusion

# Opioid Analgesic Equivalencies\*

All opioids are compared to morphine via oral morphine equivalents (OMEs).

\*These are rough estimates; individual patients may vary

\*\*Equivalency for a one time dose of IV fentanyl only

Opioid Agonist	Oral (mg)	Parenteral (mg)	Comments
<b>Morphine</b>	30	10	Not recommended for patients with renal dysfunction (CrCl <30 mL/min), as metabolites can be neurotoxic Use with caution in patients with hepatic dysfunction
<b>Hydrocodone</b>	25-30		Reduce dose in patients with severe renal and hepatic dysfunction
<b>Oxycodone</b>	20-30		Reduce dose in patients with hepatic dysfunction
<b>Hydromorphone</b>	7.5	1.5	Use with caution in patients with hepatic dysfunction
<b>Oxymorphone</b>	10		Reduce dose in patients with renal dysfunction (CrCl <50 mL/min) Contraindicated in patients with moderate or severe hepatic impairment. Reduce dose with mild hepatic impairment
<b>Fentanyl</b>		0.1** (100mcg)	Safe in renal dysfunction Consider major interactions with CYP 3A4 inhibitors or inducers For patch conversion, see box below; <u>Note</u> : IV fentanyl dose/hr = transdermal fentanyl dose
<b>Tramadol</b>	120		Maximum daily dose: 300mg; Reduce dose in patients with severe organ dysfunction Risk of serotonin syndrome and seizures

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### Note on Fentanyl Patches:

- THE 24 HOUR OME DIVIDED BY 2 IS EQUAL TO FENTANYL DOSE IN MCG/HR. Example: 50mg PO OME = 25mcg/hr fentanyl patch
- Patch takes 12-24 hours to achieve full effect. When removing a patch, remember the analgesic effect can still last up to 24 hours

### Note on Buprenorphine Patches:

- Buprenorphine is a partial mu-agonist (ceiling for side effects)
- Buprenorphine 20mcg patch is approximately equivalent to 15mcg fentanyl patch (or 30mg OME)
- Consider major interactions with CYP 3A4 inhibitors or inducers

# Patient Controlled Analgesia (PCA)

The following are suggestions for PCA orders for adults.  
Like all opioid orders, doses must be individualized.

**EDUCATE FAMILIES TO NOT PRESS THE PCA BUTTON!**

Opioid Agonist	Opioid Status, Age	Loading Dose(s) (optional)	Starting Patient Administered Dose (mg)	Lockout Interval (min)	Starting RN Bolus Dose (mg)	Continuous Infusion Rate (mg/hr)
<b>Morphine</b>	<i>Opioid Naïve</i>	2-4mg q15 min	1	8-20	1	When indicated, calculate based on intermittent PCA use or previous opioid requirements
	<i>Elderly (&gt;70 years old)</i>	2mg q20 min	0.5	8-20	0.5	
<b>Hydromorphone</b>	<i>Opioid Naïve</i>	0.2-0.3mg q15 mins	0.2	8-20	0.2	
	<i>Elderly (&gt;70 years old)</i>	0.2mg q20 mins	0.1	8-20	0.1	

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- Morphine is the opioid of choice (except for true drug allergy and renal failure)
- Capnography (EtCO<sub>2</sub>) monitoring is mandatory for all patients receiving PCA therapy, except those on mechanical ventilation, who are comfort measures only (CMO) or receiving for end of life care. See updated PCA policy for more information. In patients with RR <6 breaths/min for 1-2 minutes, PCA will alarm and pause from administering medication

# Opioid-Induced Constipation (OIC)

All patients on opioid therapy should be prescribed a bowel regimen.

Medication	Site and Mechanism of Action	Usual Starting Dose	Onset of Action	Maximum Daily Dose
<b>Stimulant Laxatives</b>				
Bisacodyl	Colon; stimulates peristalsis	PO: 5-15mg x1 dose PR: 10mg x1 dose	PO: 6-10 hours PR: 15 min–1 hour	30mg
Senna	Colon; stimulates myenteric plexus, alters water and electrolyte secretion	2 tabs (8.6mg/each) qHS	6-10 hours	68.8mg
<b>Osmotic Laxatives</b>				
Polyethylene Glycol	GI tract; osmotic effect	17g (1 capful) q24 hours in 8 ounces of water	48-96 hours	As tolerated by patient
Lactulose	Colon, osmotic effect	15-30mL q12-24 hours	24-48 hours	60mL (or 40g)
Sorbitol	Colon; delivers osmotically active molecules to the colon	15-30mL q12-24 hours	24-48 hours	27-40g
<b>Saline Laxative</b>				
Magnesium Citrate ∞	Small and large bowel; attracts and retains water in the bowel lumen	6.5-10 ounces once daily	30 min–3 hours	6.5-10 ounces
Magnesium Hydroxide (MoM) ∞	Colon; osmotic effect & increased peristalsis	30mL q12-24 hours	30 min–3 hours	60mL

- Goal is for patient to have a bowel movement every 3 days. If no bowel movement after 4 or more days, consider enema or high colonic tap water enema.
- Other medications that can exacerbate constipation: ondansetron (Zofran®), anticholinergics (tricyclic antidepressants, scopolamine, oxybutynin, promethazine, diphenhydramine), lithium, verapamil, bismuth, iron, aluminum, calcium salts. Constipation can occur with even 1 dose of IV morphine, and patient will never become tolerant to this adverse reaction
- Oral docusate capsules (alone) will not increase frequency of bowel movements
- ∞: Avoid use of MoM and related products in patients with renal dysfunction because of risk of electrolyte imbalances

# Agents for Refractory Opioid Induced Constipation

**OIC Definition:** those receiving opioids, with less than 3 spontaneous bowel movements per week despite treatment with maximum doses of two first-line laxatives (*found on slide 8*)

Preferred, Formulary Agent: **1<sup>st</sup> line: Naloxegol (PO)**

<b>Dosing:</b>	<b>Administration:</b>
<p><i>Initial dose: 25mg once daily</i>  <i>Reduce in patients with CrCl &lt;60 mL/min to 12.5mg once daily</i>  <i>Avoid in severe hepatic impairment</i>  <i>Use with strong CYP3A4 inhibitors is contraindicated; avoid if possible with moderate CYP3A4 inhibitors</i></p>	<p>All other laxatives should be held for at least 3 days at initiation of naloxegol therapy. Other laxatives can be initiated after 3 days if inadequate results with naloxegol alone</p> <p>Naloxegol should be taken on an empty stomach</p>

Formulary-Restricted Agents (Restricted to: Pain Service, Oncology, Critical Care, GI Services, Palliative Care):  
**2<sup>nd</sup> line: Naldemedine (PO) and 3<sup>rd</sup> line: Methylnaltrexone (PO and SC)**

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<b>Naldemedine dosing:</b> 0.2mg PO daily with or without food			<b>Administration:</b>
<b>Methylnaltrexone PO Dosing:</b> 450mg once daily (150mg if CrCl <60mL/min)			<p>Not recommended for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use &gt;4 months</li> <li>- Treatment of post-operative ileus</li> <li>- Patients with known or suspected mechanical gastrointestinal obstruction</li> </ul> <p>Discontinue all maintenance laxatives before starting, may resume if suboptimal response after 3 days</p> <p>Methylnaltrexone administration recommendations:                      PO: take 30 minutes before first meal of day                      SC: inject into upper arm, abdomen, or thigh</p>
<b>Methylnaltrexone SC Dosing:</b>			
Patient Weight		Dose (Administer once daily or every other day)	
Pounds	Kilograms		
<84	<38	0.15mg/kg	
84-136	38-62	8mg	
136-251	62-114	12mg	
>251	>114	0.15mg/kg	

\*In patients with renal impairment (CrCl <60 mL/min), reduce dose by ½

References: Product Information: RELISTOR(R) subcutaneous injection, methylnaltrexone bromide subcutaneous injection. Salix Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (per FDA), Raleigh, NC, 2014. 9/2015. Product Information: MOVANTIK(TM) oral tablets, naloxegol oral tablets. AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals. Wilmington, DE. 1/2015. Product Information: SYMPROIC(R) oral tablets, naldemedine oral tablets, BioDelivery Sciences International. Raleigh, NC. 5/2020.

# Prescribing of Take-Home Intranasal Naloxone Kits

**Patients who should be considered for take-home intranasal naloxone kits at discharge  
(any of the following):**

- 1) Currently prescribed >50mg OME/day
- 2) Currently prescribed long-acting or extended release opioids (especially Oxycontin® and methadone)
- 3) Concurrently prescribed sedating medications (especially benzodiazepines and gabapentin)
- 4) Known history of opioid use disorder or history of overdose
- 5) Prescribed opioids and carries a diagnosis of pulmonary disease (e.g. OSA, COPD, etc.)

	<b>Narcan® Nasal Spray</b>
<b>Dosing</b>	Administer a single spray/dose into one nostril. May repeat dose q2-3 minutes until patient is responsive or EMS arrives.
<b>Notes</b>	FDA approved formulation. Kit contains 2 doses

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In 2015, Pennsylvania issued a **state-wide standing order** for naloxone kits such that any Pennsylvania resident can obtain these kits from participating pharmacies without a prescription from a prescriber.

- To find a local pharmacy that carries intranasal naloxone visit: <http://www.overdosefreepa.pitt.edu/find-naloxone/>

# Interventional Pain Management

Interventions that minimize systemic opioids and help with pain relief in a targeted fashion can be considered for a wide spectrum of patients. At UPMC, the chronic pain and palliative care services collaborate to identify patients who are most likely to benefit from such interventions.

Examples of available interventions which are best supported by evidence are listed below:

Common Nerve Blocks	
Block Type:	Indications:
<b>Celiac Plexus Block</b>	Abdominal visceral pain from: pancreatic cancer and other upper abdominal tumors
<b>Superior Hypogastric Block</b>	Pelvic visceral pain from gynecological, colorectal or GU cancers
<b>Lumbar Sympathetic Block</b>	Intractable LE pain from PVD or Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome
<b>Pudendal Nerve Block</b>	Vaginal pain, penile/scrotal pain, perineal pain
<b>Sphenopalatine/Trigeminal Nerve Block</b>	Facial pain
<b>Epidural Steroid Injection</b>	Low back pain – often for non-malignant pain
Centrally Implanted Pumps	
Hardware Type:	Indications:
<b>Intrathecal Pump</b>	Pain refractory to systemic opioids with a prognosis of >3 months
<b>Tunneled Epidural Catheter</b>	Pain refractory to systemic opioids with a prognosis of <3 months
<b>Spinal Cord Stimulator</b>	Most helpful in refractory neuropathic limb pain (especially ischemic limb)

**Exclude patients who are:**

- Neutropenic/Septic
- Infection in the region of the proposed procedure
- Coagulopathic (INR >1.4 or platelets <100K)
- On anticoagulants/antiplatelet agents that are not safe to hold or reverse

# Medical Cannabinoids

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Medical cannabinoids include: 1. Single molecular compounds (e.g. dronabinol – *contains tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) only*); 2. Liquid extracts (e.g. nabiximols - *not yet approved in the US*); and 3. Botanicals (i.e. medical marijuana).

## FAQs: Medical Marijuana

- 1. What medical marijuana formulations are approved in PA?** Pill, oil, topical forms, tinctures and liquids, and dry leaf formulations for vaporization or nebulization only. No smoking or plant forms are allowed.
- 2. How can patients obtain medical marijuana?** There is a 4 step process. 1. Patient registers for program through medical marijuana registry; 2. State-approved physician certifies patient suffers from a medical condition that qualifies for medical marijuana (copay usually included); 3. Patient pays for medical marijuana card (up to \$50); 4. Patient gets medical marijuana from approved dispensary.
- 3. What serious medical conditions qualify a patient for medical marijuana?** The list is constantly updated. *Some* of the approved conditions are: ALS, autism, cancer, Crohn's disease, epilepsy, glaucoma, HIV/AIDS, Huntington's disease, IBS, MS, Parkinson's Disease, PTSD, severe chronic or intractable pain, and sickle cell anemia.
- 4. How much does medical marijuana cost?** Varies. A month supply can cost anywhere from \$30-200 depending on formulation and route. Costs are determined by individual dispensaries. Insurances do not cover medical marijuana. The hospice benefit does not cover medical marijuana.
- 5. Can the patient use medical marijuana in the hospital?** Potentially. Per UPMC policy, attending physicians may approve requests for patients enrolled in the medical marijuana program with a designated caregiver who can assist with administration during the hospitalization. However, clinical staff will not under any circumstances handle medical marijuana, including obtaining, storing or administering.

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To learn more, visit the PA medical marijuana website: <https://www.pa.gov/guides/pennsylvania-medical-marijuana-program/>

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References: Medical Marijuana During Hospitalization at UPMC Presbyterian-Shadyside: Summary of Policy CP-75:  
<https://inonet.upmc.com/UPMCPolicies/PRSHPolicyDocuments/CP75.pdf>

# Assessment of Dyspnea

**For Patients Who Can Communicate:** Ask about Severity (cannot rely on RR or pO<sub>2</sub> alone):

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No Shortness of Breath					Worst Shortness of Breath Imaginable					

**For Patients Who Cannot Communicate:** e.g.: Respiratory Distress Observation Scale (RDOS):

	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
Heart Rate	<90 bpm	90-109 bpm	≥110 bpm
Respiratory Rate	≤18 breaths/min	19-30 breaths/min	>30 breaths/min
Restlessness (non purposeful movements)	None	Occasional, slight movements	Frequent movements
Paradoxical Breathing Pattern (abdomen moves on inspiration)	None		Present
Accessory Respiratory Muscle Use (rise in clavicle during inspiration)	None	Slight rise	Pronounced rise
Grunting at End-Expiration (guttural sound)	None		Present
Nasal Flaring (involuntary movements in nares)	None		Present
Look of Fear	None		Eyes wide open, muscle tense, etc.
<b>TOTAL:</b>			

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**A score of 3 or more (indicating moderate) should prompt the administration of medication for dyspnea. A score of 7 (indicating severe) or higher should prompt a call to primary provider or palliative and supportive care team.**

# Treatment of Dyspnea

- Address potential underlying etiologies: respiratory disease (e.g. COPD), cardiovascular diseases (e.g. CHF), infection, anemia, chronic kidney disease (CKD)
- Treat utilizing both nonpharmacological interventions and medications

**Nonpharmacological Interventions:** Handheld fan, pulmonary rehab, oxygen (with input from pulmonologist)

**Medications:** First line therapy: low-dose opioids. Include PRN reason: dyspnea for low-dose opioid orders to be used for dyspnea and NOT for pain or NOT only for pain).

- Consider benzodiazepines (BZDs), only if anxiety component exists. BZDs will not improve dyspnea alone

	Starting Doses	Other Dosing Considerations
<b>Opioid Naïve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>For Non End of Life Patients:</u> Consider oxycodone 2.5-5mg PO q4-6h PRN or morphine ER 10-20mg/day</li> <li>• <u>For End of Life Patients:</u> Morphine 2-5mg IV q4h PRN</li> <li>• Opioid doses exceeding 30mg OME/day are not recommended in opioid naïve patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If distress not relieved in 15 minutes after starting dose, give bolus equal to the loading dose increased by 50%. If severe distress persists repeat the dose every 15 minutes until comfortable</li> <li>• For increased pain/distress give extra bolus dose(s) equal to the last given bolus dose every 30 minutes as needed</li> <li>• If using more than 2 bolus doses over a 6-hour period, consider starting a continuous infusion</li> </ul>
<b>Opioid Tolerant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calculate the equianalgesic parenteral dose of morphine for the last 24 hours (<i>see slides 6 for more information</i>), and consider dosing strategies as listed</li> <li>• Increase PRN dose by 50%</li> <li>• Opioid doses should not exceed more than a 25% increase in opioid tolerant patients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide the total 24 hour IV morphine dose by 24 to determine initial hourly infusion rate (mg/hour). Start continuous infusion at this rate</li> <li>• If patient pain/distress use loading dose = hourly infusion rate</li> <li>• If distress not relieved in 15 minutes after initial loading dose or the patient is in increased pain/distress, administer the loading dose increased by 50% and repeat every 15 minutes until comfortable</li> <li>• If using more than two bolus doses over 6-hour period, determine new continuous infusion rate by recalculating total dose given over last 6 hours and dividing it by 6</li> </ul>

# Nausea and Vomiting Treatment

Medications should be selected based on perceived etiology and pathophysiology.

	Drug	Starting Dose/Route	MDD	Comments
First Line Therapies	<b>Metoclopramide*</b>	5-20mg PO/SC/IV AC and HS	60mg	<i>Dopamine antagonist</i> Contraindicated in bowel obstruction Risk of EPS with prolonged use (>12 weeks)
	<b>Haloperidol</b>	0.5-4mg PO/SC/IV q6h	5mg	<i>Dopamine antagonist</i> IV has higher risk of EPS and QTc prolongation than PO. Risk may not be significant with lower doses for emesis
	<b>Olanzapine</b>	2.5-5mg PO once daily	10mg	<i>Dopamine, histamine, serotonin, alpha-1 and acetylcholine antagonist</i> Risk of QTc prolongation although may not be significant with lower doses used for nausea; Common ADRs: sedation, dry mouth, headache, dizziness, increased appetite
Second Line Therapies or Compelling Indications	<b>Prochlorperazine</b>	5-10mg PO/IV q6h or 25mg PR q6h	40mg	<i>Dopamine and histamine antagonist</i> Risk of EPS; Common ADR: sedation
	<b>Ondansetron</b>	4-8mg PO/IV q4-8h	32mg	<i>Serotonin antagonist</i> Helpful for chemotherapy induced nausea only Common ADRs: headache, fatigue and constipation
	<b>Scopolamine</b>	1.5mg patch q72h	1 patch q72h	<i>Acetylcholine antagonist</i> Common ADRs: dry mouth, blurred vision, ileus, urinary retention. Considered a higher cost agent
	<b>Dexamethasone</b>	4-8mg PO/IV qAM or BID	8-16mg	Helpful for nausea due to raised ICP Common ADRs: agitation, insomnia, and hyperglycemia

\*Metoclopramide is considered first line for empiric therapy; MDD: maximum daily dose (for nausea); ICP: intracranial pressure

References: Glare P, Miller J, Nikolova T, Tickoo R. Treating nausea and vomiting in palliative care: a review. *Clin Interv Aging*. 2011;6:243-59.  
Wood GJ, Shega JW, Lynch B, Von Roenn JH. Management of intractable nausea and vomiting in patients at the end of life: "I was feeling nauseous all of the time . . . nothing was working". *JAMA*. 2007 Sep 12;298(10):1196-207.

# Diagnosis of Delirium

- Delirium is conceptualized as a reversible illness, except in the last 24-48 hours of life
- Delirium occurs in at least 25-50% of hospitalized cancer patients, and in a higher percentage of patients who are terminally ill
- Delirium increases the risk of in-hospital and six month mortality

<b>Potential Etiologies:</b>	<b>D: Drugs</b>	Opioids, anticholinergics, sedatives, benzodiazepines, steroids, chemo - and immunotherapies, some antibiotics
	<b>E: Eyes and Ears</b>	Poor vision, hearing, isolation
	<b>L: Low flow states</b>	Hypoxia, MI, CHF, COPD, shock
	<b>I: Infections</b>	
	<b>R: Retention (of urine or stool)</b>	
	<b>I: Intracranial</b>	CNS metastases, seizures, CVA, hypertensive encephalopathy
	<b>U: Under hydration/nutrition/sleep/pain</b>	
	<b>M: Metabolic disorders</b>	Sodium, glucose, thyroid, hepatic, deficiencies of Vitamin B12, folate, niacin, and thiamine and toxic levels of lead, manganese, mercury, alcohol

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## DSM-V Criteria for delirium includes five components:

- A disturbance in attention (i.e., reduced ability to direct, focus, sustain, and shift attention) and awareness (reduced orientation to the environment)
- The disturbance develops over a short period of time (usually hours to a few days), represents a change from baseline attention and awareness, and tends to fluctuate in severity during the course of a day
- An additional disturbance in cognition (e.g. memory deficit, disorientation, language, visuospatial ability, or perception)
- The disturbances in Criteria A and C are not better explained by a pre-existing, established or evolving neurocognitive disorder and do not occur in the context of a severely reduced level of arousal, such as coma
- There is evidence from the history, physical examination or laboratory findings that the disturbance is a direct physiological consequence of another medical condition, substance intoxication or withdrawal, or exposure to a toxin, or is due to multiple etiologies

# Diagnosis of Delirium

## 3D CAM (Confusion Assessment Method)

Diagnosis is positive with presence of: 1 AND 2; and either 3 OR 4

Feature	Questions Asked	Observations at Bedside	Positive Answers
<b>1. Acute Onset or Fluctuation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the past day have you felt confused?</li> <li>• During the past day did you think you were not really in the hospital?</li> <li>• During the past day did you see things that were not really there?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fluctuation in level of consciousness</li> <li>○ Fluctuation in attention during interview</li> <li>○ Fluctuation in speech or thinking</li> </ul>	Any answer other than 'no' is positive
			Any positive observation is a yes
- AND -			
<b>2. Inattention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me the days of the week backwards, starting with Saturday?</li> <li>• Can you tell me the months of the year backwards, starting with December?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did the patient have trouble keeping track of what was being said during the interview?</li> <li>○ Did the patient appear inappropriately distracted by environmental stimuli?</li> </ul>	Anything other than 'correct' is coded as positive
			Either observation is positive
- AND EITHER -			
<b>3. Disorganized Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me the year we are in right now?</li> <li>• Can you tell me the day of the week?</li> <li>• Can you tell me what type of place this is?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Was the patient's flow of ideas unclear or illogical, for example: did the patient tell a story unrelated to the interview (tangential)?</li> <li>○ Was the patient's conversation rambling, for example did he/she give inappropriately verbose and off target responses?</li> <li>○ Was the patient's speech unusually limited or sparse? (i.e. yes/no answers)?</li> </ul>	Any answer other than 'correct' is coded as positive
			Answer is 'yes'
- OR -			
<b>4. Altered Level of Consciousness</b>		Was the patient's speech unusually limited or sparse? (i.e. yes/no answers)	Either observation is positive

# Treatment of Delirium

- **Always consider nonpharmacological interventions** to prevent and reduce delirium. Can include: frequent orientation, treatment of hearing and vision problems, treatment of incontinence, and volume repletion
- Benzodiazepines are NOT effective in treating delirium not associated with alcohol withdrawal, may worsen delirium, and should be used cautiously
- **Although evidence is mixed, neuroleptics can be considered for the treatment of delirium.** Haloperidol is considered first line agent

Medication	Starting Dose	MDD	Adverse Drug Reactions			
			EPS	Anti-cholinergic	Sedation	QTc Prolongation
Haloperidol	0.5-1mg (2mg in ICU) BID to q8h	20mg	PO: ++ IV: +++	+	0/-	PO: + IV: ++
Risperidone	0.25-1mg BID, up to q6h	6mg	++	+	++	++
Olanzapine	2.5-10mg daily	20mg	+	++	+++	+
Quetiapine	12.5-50mg BID	800mg	+	++	+++	++
Aripiprazole	5-15mg qAM	30mg	++	+	++	0/-
Thioridazine	50-100mg TID	800mg	+	+++	+++	+

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MDD: maximum daily dose

⚠ The FDA has determined that the use of antipsychotic medications in the treatment of behavioral disorders in elderly patients with dementia is associated with increased mortality. This risk appears to be highest during the first two weeks of use.

# Treatment of Depression and Anxiety

## Commonly prescribed antidepressants:

Category	Medication	Starting Dose	Target Daily Dose	Adverse Drug Reactions		
				Anti-cholinergic	Insomnia	GI Distress
SSRIs	Citalopram	10-20mg daily	10-40mg	+	+	++
	Escitalopram	5-10mg daily	10-20mg	+	+++	++
	Sertraline	25-50mg daily	50-200mg	-	+	+++
	Fluoxetine	10mg daily	40mg	-	+	+
	Paroxetine	10mg daily	40mg	++	+	+
SNRIs	Venlafaxine (IR and XR)*	75mg/day (either qAM (XR) or divided TID (IR))	150-375mg	+	++++	++
	Duloxetine <sup>⊗</sup>	20mg BID	30-60mg	+	++	++
Stimulants	Methylphenidate <sup>⊗</sup>	2.5-5mg BID (at 08:00/12:00)	5-40mg	--	++++	+

\* Dual serotonin/norepinephrine action at doses of 150-225mg which is effective in neuropathic pain and is mildly activating. On switching from the venlafaxine XR to venlafaxine, the shorter half life of venlafaxine requires frequent dosing to reach the same dose of venlafaxine XR. Use with caution in patients with hypertension

⊗ Do not use in patients with liver dysfunction

⊗ Energizing, will see effect of medication after first dose

# Treatment of Oral Secretions at the End of Life

- As the level of consciousness decreases in the dying process, patients lose their ability to swallow and clear oral secretions. As air moves over the secretions, the resulting turbulence produces noisy ventilation with each breath, described as gurgling or rattling noises (also referred to as the "death rattle")
- These sounds are good predictors of near death; one study indicated the median time from the onset of death rattle to death was 16 hours<sup>1</sup>
- Families may feel distress when hearing sounds produced by secretions at the end of life. It is important to discuss this with them and talk about how certain therapies can be helpful
- It may be helpful to discuss the role of oral and pharyngeal suctioning with family and nursing staff. While suctioning can help clear secretions initially, ongoing suctioning can cause discomfort at the end of life

**Nonpharmacological Interventions:** Position the patient on their side or in a semi-prone position (30-45° angle) to facilitate postural drainage

**Medications:** Standard of care are muscarinic receptor blockers (anticholinergic drugs). Note these agents will only address future secretions - will not dry up present secretions

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Medication (Route)	Starting Dose	Onset of Action	Maximum Daily Dose
Glycopyrrolate (PO)*	1mg q4-6h PRN	30 min	8mg
Glycopyrrolate (SC/IV)*	0.2mg q4-6h PRN	1 min	8mg
Atropine (IV)	0.1mg q4-6h PRN	1 min	2mg
Atropine $\Delta$ (SL drops)	1gtt (1%) q4-6h PRN	30 min	48gtts
Scopolamine (Transdermal Patch)	1mg patch q72h	12 hrs	1 patch q72 hrs
Hyoscyamine (Tabs, and SL Tabs)	0.125mg TID-QID PRN	30 min	1.5mg

\* Glycopyrrolate will not cross the blood-brain-barrier, reducing the risk of CNS toxicity (sedation, delirium)

$\Delta$  Use atropine ophthalmic drops

# Spirituality Pearls

Spirituality consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that contribute to defining a person and to the way life is experienced. It is important to realize just how dynamic the concept of spirituality is, especially in patients with serious illness.

## Incorporating Spirituality into Patient Care:

### HOPE Talking Map (to ask patients about their spirituality)

<b>H: Hope</b>	Sources of hope, strength, comfort, meaning, peace, love and connection
<b>O: Organized Religion</b>	Role of organized religion in the patient's life
<b>P: Personal</b>	Personal spiritual practices
<b>E: Effects</b>	Effects of patient's spiritual and/or religious values on care

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### Principles of Spiritual Care:

- **Combination:** Professionalism with compassion
- **Presence:** To be maximally useful to patients and their experiences, we must be fully aware of our own biases and distortions
- **Listening:** Listening attentively with genuineness and acceptance
- **Facilitate Exploration:** Meaning cannot be given by another, it must be found by the person him/herself
- **Allow for Mystery:** Some issues will always defy explanation
- **Allow for Paradox:** Conflicting priorities in the care of patients may mean that some questions are difficult to answer. The emotional pain of this needs to be recognized and supported
- **Foster Realistic Hope:** To give unrealistic hope that life will be prolonged is unethical but there is always something more that can be done to bolster hope in a realistic way
- **Create 'Space' for Patients:** Patients need to feel that they still have some choice and control

### Inquiring Patients Regarding Formal Chaplain Consult:

- **Referral by Inclusion:** "Our treatment team consists of a variety of professionals to assist you during this stressful time. In addition to your physicians and nurses, you may meet social workers, chaplains and others. We all work together on your behalf."
- **Referral by Exclusion:** "Would it be helpful for a chaplain to see you?"

# UPMC Palliative Care and Pain Treatment Resources

<b>Inpatient Supportive and Palliative Care Services</b>	
PUH/MUH Supportive & Palliative Care Service	412-647-7243; pager: 8511
Shadyside Supportive & Palliative Care Service	412-647-7243; pager: 8513
Magee Womens Hospital of UPMC Supportive and Palliative Care Service	412-647-7243; pager: 8510
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC Supportive Care Program	412-692-3234
VA Palliative Care Program Inpatient and Oncology	412-360-6195
UPMC Altoona Supportive and Palliative Care Service (Altoona Family Practice)	814-889-2701
UPMC East Supportive and Palliative Care Service	412-858-9565
UPMC Hamot Supportive and Palliative Care Service	814-877-5987
UPMC McKeesport Supportive and Palliative Care Service	412-664-2717
UPMC Mercy Supportive and Palliative Care Service	412-949-5467
UPMC Passavant Supportive and Palliative Care Service	412-367-6700
UPMC St Margaret Supportive and Palliative Care Service	412-784-5111
<b>Inpatient Medical Ethics Services</b>	
PUH/MUH Medical Ethics	412-647-2345 (call operator, ask for Medical Ethics)
Shadyside Medical Ethics	412-623-2121 (call operator, ask for Medical Ethics)
<b>Inpatient Pain Treatment Services</b>	
PUH/MUH Chronic Pain Service	412-692-2234
Shadyside Chronic Pain Service (Center Commons)	412-665-8030; after hours call: 412-665-8031
PUH/MUH Acute Interventional Perioperative Pain Service (AIPPS)	412-647-7243; pager: 7246 (PAIN)
Shadyside Acute Interventional Perioperative Pain Service (AIPPS)	412-692-2333

# UPMC Palliative Care and Pain Treatment Resources

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Outpatient Services	
Benedum Geriatric Center Supportive Care Clinic	412-692-4200
Hillman Cancer Center's Cancer Pain and Supportive Care Program	412-692-4724
UPMC Heart and Vascular Institute's Advanced Heart Failure Clinic	412-647-3031
Comprehensive Lung Center	412-648-6161
Renal Supportive Clinic	412-802-3043
UPMC Presbyterian Pain Medicine	412-692-2234
Magee Women's Cancer Center	412-641-4530
Magee Gynecological Cancer Program	412-641-5411
St Margaret Geropalliative Care Clinic	412-784-5050
St Margaret Pain Medicine	412-784-5119
Passavant Pain and Supportive Care Clinic	412-748-5790
Family Hospice	Administration: 412-572-8800 Info/Referrals: 1-800-513-2148

# UPMC Spiritual Care Resources

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Inpatient Hospital Spiritual or Pastoral Care Offices	
UPMC Magee-Women's Hospital	412-641-4525
UPMC Presbyterian/Montefiore	412-647-7560
UPMC Shadyside	412-459-8377/412-623-1692
UPMC St. Margaret	412-784-4749
UPMC Mercy	412-232-8198
UPMC McKeesport	412-664-2057
UPMC East	412-357-3151
UPMC Passavant	412-367-6700/412-297-6865
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh	412-692-5349
VA Hospital Oakland campus	412-822-1551

## Indications for Palliative Care Referral:

- Pain in patients with life-limiting illness
- Management of other symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, delirium
- Negotiating goals of treatment or end-of-life decision making
- Family support for a patient with a life-limiting illness
- Psychological or spiritual counseling for patients and their families
- Discharge planning and interface with local hospices
- Bereavement services in the event of death
- Outpatient palliative care follow up

Questions or comments regarding this information, contact Robert Arnold, MD ([rabob@pitt.edu](mailto:rabob@pitt.edu)). This information provided by the UPMC Supportive and Palliative Care Programs are merely in the form of recommendations and do not replace the service of a provider. Authors: Mamta Bhatnagar, MD and Maria Lowry, PharmD, with contributions from Julie Childers, MD; Scott Freeman, MD; Amar Bansal, MD; Susan Jessell, CRNP; Pierre Azzam, MD; and Dan Leger, BCC, RN. This guide was made possible with the assistance of Colleen Kosky and the generous support of the UPMC Palliative and Supportive Institute. Produced in cooperation with the University of Pittsburgh.  
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