

Clinic Induction Protocol – Sample

Day 1

- Patient presents to clinic in withdrawal
- RN or physician assessment with COWS
- COWS needs to be at least 6 in order to proceed. If 5 or less, reschedule induction.
- For mild withdrawal symptoms (COWS 6-12), initiate with 2 mg buprenorphine
- For moderate (≥ 13) or severe (≥ 25) withdrawal symptoms, initiate with 4 mg buprenorphine
- MD writes prescription for buprenorphine/naloxone (2/0.5 mg #4-6, 4/1 mg #2-3, or 8/2 mg #1-2)
- Patient takes first dose under observation of RN, NP, or physician
- Patient observed in clinic for 1-2 hours
- If precipitated withdrawal symptoms occur, treat as appropriate or consider transfer to ED
- If withdrawal symptoms relieved, patient discharged
- If withdrawal symptoms persist after 60-90 minutes (COWS ≥ 6) then a second dose of buprenorphine is given under observation of RN, NP, or physician
- Patient observed additional 1-2 hours
- If withdrawal symptoms relieved, patient discharged
- If withdrawal symptoms persist, give symptomatic treatment (clonidine, NSAIDs, anti-emetics, etc.) and discharge patient
- Maximum Day 1 dose: 8-12 mg

Day 2

- MD writes prescription if necessary
- Patient takes total dose received on Day 1 under observation of RN, NP, or physician
- Patient observed in clinic for 1-2 hours
- If withdrawal symptoms relieved, patient discharged
- If withdrawal symptoms persist after 60-90 minutes (COWS ≥ 6) then a second dose of buprenorphine is given under observation of RN, NP, or physician
- Patient observed additional 1-2 hours
- If withdrawal symptoms relieved, patient discharged
- If withdrawal symptoms persist, give symptomatic treatment (clonidine, NSAIDs, anti-emetics, etc.) and discharge patient
- Maximum Day 2 dose: 12-16 mg

Day 3

- MD writes prescription if necessary
- Patient takes total dose received on Day 2 under observation of RN, NP, or physician
- Patient observed in clinic for 1-2 hours
- If withdrawal symptoms relieved, patient discharged with prescription for days 4-7
- If withdrawal symptoms persist after 60-90 minutes (COWS ≥ 6) then a second dose of buprenorphine is given under observation of RN, NP, or physician
- Patient observed additional 1-2 hours
- If withdrawal symptoms relieved, patient discharged with prescription for days 4-7
- If withdrawal symptoms persist, give symptomatic treatment (clonidine, NSAIDs, anti-emetics, etc.) and discharge patient with instructions to return the following day
- Maximum Day 3 dose: 16 mg
- Maximum Day 1 dose: 8-12 mg