

Tapering Quick Tips

Deprescribing/Tapering of Opioids (OPs)

Once determined that OPs are to be tapered, assess OPs type and patient stability for selection of taper rate

- Explain that taper may take months (3-6 months)
 - Set start and reasonable completion dates
 - Provide behavioral supports and overdose education if at risk (naloxone)
- Schedule visits frequently stressing behavioral supports
 - Follow-up every 1-4 weeks with each dose reduction
 - May use adherence checks
 - Urine drug screens (UDS), pill counts, PDMP checks and/or short fills
- Discuss patient expectations and symptoms of withdrawal, slowing/pausing taper when necessary
 - Provide options for symptom management (antidepressants, anticonvulsants, NSAIDs, clonidine, ondansetron, Imodium, hydroxyzine, dicyclomine)

Long-acting OPs / Stable patients

↓TDD x **20-40% of initial dose each month** or,
↓TDD x **5-10% of initial dose each week**

Short-acting OPs / Less stable patients

↓TDD x **20-60% of initial dose each month** or,
↓TDD x **5-15% of initial dose each week**

Once 25-50% initial dose reached, may consider slowing taper further until discontinuation

Deprescribing/Tapering of Benzodiazepines (BZPs)

Once determined that BZPs are to be tapered, assess patient risk factors for selection of taper rate

- Explain that taper may take months (up to 12 months)
 - Set start and reasonable completion dates
- Switch to long-acting BZPs prior to taper initiation (consider reducing calculated dose by 25-50%)
 - Schedule follow-up visits frequently stressing behavioral supports
 - Follow-up 2-4 days after conversion, then every 1-4 weeks with each dose reduction
 - May use adherence checks (UDS, pill counts, PDMP checks and/or short fills)
- Discuss patient expectations and symptoms of withdrawal, slowing/pausing taper when necessary
 - Provide options for symptom management (trazodone, buspirone, antidepressants, hydroxyzine, clonidine, anticonvulsants, propranolol)

Intermediate-acting BZP Equivalence

Alprazolam	0.5 mg
Clonazepam	0.5 mg
Lorazepam	1 mg
Temazepam	30 mg

Long-acting BZP Equivalence

Chlordiazepoxide	10 mg
Diazepam	10 mg

Shorter Taper

↓ TDD x **20-40% of initial dose each month** in four divided doses (QID) or,
↓ TDD x **5-10% of initial dose each week** in four divided doses (QID)

Longer Taper

↓ TDD x **10-20% of initial dose each month** in four divided doses (QID) or,
↓ TDD x **2.5-5% of initial dose each week** in four divided doses (QID)

References:

- Pain Treatment Guidelines - Oregon Pain Guidance/Columbia Pacific CCO 2017
- Pain Management Opioid Taper Decision Tool: A VA Clinician's Guide. US Dept of Veterans Affairs. Oct 2016
- Re-Evaluating the Use of Benzodiazepines: A VA Clinician's Guide. US Department of Veterans affairs. Aug 2016