

Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Scale (COWS)

Times: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

1. Resting Pulse Rate: (record beats per minute)

Measured after patient is sitting or lying for one minute

0 pulse rate 80 or below

1 pulse rate 81-100

2 pulse rate 101-120

4 pulse rate greater than 120

Score 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

2. Sweating: over past ½ hour not accounted for by room temperature or patient activity.

0 no report of chills or flushing

1 subjective report of chills or flushing

2 flushed or observable moistness on face

3 beads of sweat on brow or face

4 sweat streaming off face

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

3. Restlessness Observation during assessment

0 able to sit still

1 reports difficulty sitting still, but is able to do so

3 frequent shifting or extraneous movements of legs/arms

5 Unable to sit still for more than a few seconds

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

4. Pupil size

0 pupils pinned or normal size for room light

1 pupils possibly larger than normal for room light

2 pupils moderately dilated

5 pupils so dilated that only the rim of the iris is visible

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

5. Bone or Joint aches If patient was having pain previously, only the additional component attributed to opiates withdrawal is scored

0 not present

1 mild diffuse discomfort

2 patient reports severe diffuse aching of joints/ muscles

4 patient is rubbing joints or muscles and is unable to sit still because of discomfort

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

6. Runny nose or tearing Not accounted for by cold symptoms or allergies

0 not present

1 nasal stuffiness or unusually moist eyes

2 nose running or tearing

4 nose constantly running or tears streaming down cheeks

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

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7. Gastrointestinal Upset: *over last ½ hour*

- 0 no gastrointestinal symptoms
- 1 stomach cramps
- 2 nausea or loose stool
- 3 vomiting or diarrhea
- 5 multiple episodes of diarrhea or vomiting

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

8. Tremor *observation of outstretched hands*

- 0 No tremor
- 1 tremor can be felt, but not observed
- 2 slight tremor observable
- 4 gross tremor or muscle twitching

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

9. Yawning *Observation during assessment*

- 0 no yawning
- 1 yawning once or twice during assessment
- 2 yawning three or more times during assessment
- 4 yawning several times/minute

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

10. Anxiety or Irritability

- 0 none
- 1 patient reports increasing irritability or anxiousness
- 2 patient obviously irritable anxious
- 4 patient so irritable or anxious that participation in the assessment is difficult

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

11. Gooseflesh skin

- 0 skin is smooth
- 3 piloerection of skin can be felt or hairs standing up on arms
- 5 prominent piloerection

Score: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Total

Scores: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Score:

- ____ 5-12 = mild opioid withdrawal
- ____ 13-24 = moderate opioid withdrawal
- ____ 25-36 = moderately severe opioid withdrawal
- ____ > 36 = severe withdrawal opioid withdrawal