

Clinical Opioid Withdrawal Scale (COWS)

Date: _____ Name: _____ DOB: _____

Time of assessment				
Resting heart rate (measure after lying or sitting for one minute) 0- HR 80 or below; 1- HR 81–100; 2- HR 101–120; 4- HR greater than 120				
Sweating (preceding 30 minutes and not related to room temp/activity) 0- no report of chills or flushing; 1- subjective report of chills or flushing; 2- flushed or observable moisture on face; 3- beads of sweat on brow or face; 4- sweat streaming off face				
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				
Bone or joint aches (not including existing joint pains) 0- not present; 1- mild diffuse discomfort; 2- patient reports severe diffuse aching of joints/ muscles; 4- patient is rubbing joints / muscles plus unable to sit still due to discomfort				
Runny nose or tearing (not related to URTI 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				
GI upset (over last 30 minutes) 0- no GI symptoms; 1- stomach cramps; 2- nausea or loose stool; 3- vomiting or diarrhea; 5- multiple episodes of vomiting or diarrhea				
Tremor (observe outstretched hands) 0- no tremor; 1- tremor can be felt, but not observed; 2- slight tremor observable; 4- gross tremor or muscle twitching				
Yawning (observed 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				
Anxiety or irritability (0–4) 0- none; 1- patient reports increasing irritability or anxiousness; 2- patient obviously irritable or anxious; 4- patient so irritable or anxious that participation in the assessment is difficult				
Gooseflesh skin (0–5) 0- skin is smooth; 3- piloerection (goosebumps) of skin can be felt or hair standing up on arms; 5- prominent piloerection				
TOTAL (5–12 = mild; 13–24 = moderate; 25–36 = moderately severe; > 36 = severe)				