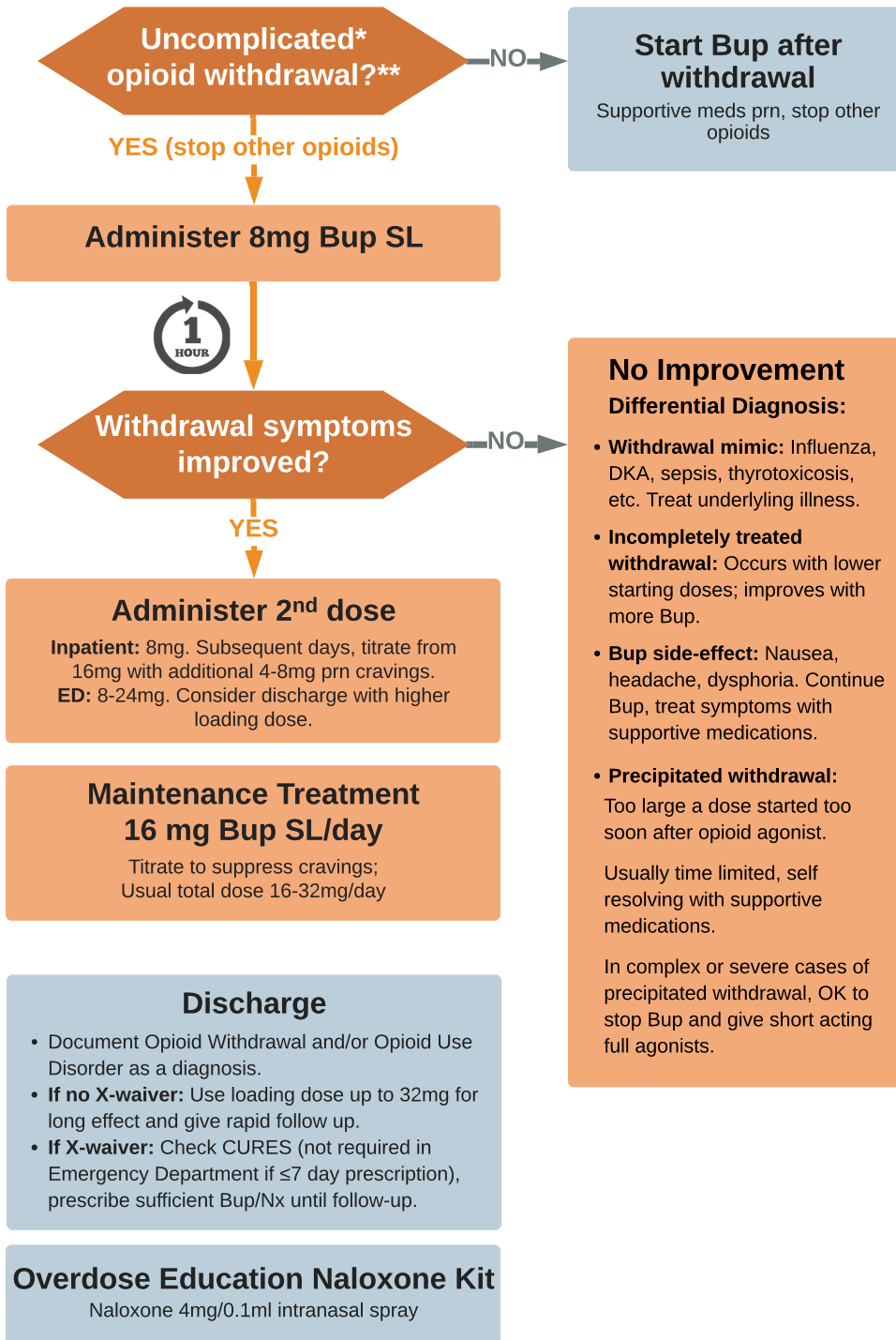




# Buprenorphine (Bup) Hospital Quick Start

- Any prescriber can order Bup in the hospital, even without an x-waiver.
- Bup is a high-affinity, partial agonist opioid that is safe and highly effective for treating opioid use disorder.
- If patient is stable on methadone or prefers methadone, recommend continuation of methadone as first-line treatment.



## Buprenorphine Dosing

- Either Bup or Bup/Nx (buprenorphine/naloxone) films or tab sublingual (SL) are OK.
- If unable to take oral/SL, try Bup 0.3mg IV/IM.
- OK to start with lower initial dose: Bup 2-4mg SL.
- Total initial daily dose above 16mg may increase duration of action beyond 24 hrs.
- Bup SL onset 15 min, peak 1 hr, steady state 7 days
- May dose qday or if co-existing chronic pain split dosing TID/QID.

## \*Complicating Factors

- Altered mental status, delirium, intoxication
- Severe acute pain, trauma or planned large surgeries
- Organ failure or other severe medical illness
- Recent methadone use

## \*\*Diagnosing Opioid Withdrawal

### Subjective symptoms AND one objective sign

**Subjective:** Patient reports feeling "bad" due to withdrawal (nausea, stomach cramps, body aches, restlessness, hot and cold, stuffy nose)

**Objective:** [at least one] restlessness, sweating, rhinorrhea, dilated pupils, watery eyes, tachycardia, yawning, goose bumps, vomiting, diarrhea, tremor

### Typical withdrawal onset:

≥ 12 hrs after short acting opioid  
 ≥ 24 hrs after long acting opioid  
 ≥ 48 hrs after methadone (can be >72 hrs)

**If unsure, use COWS (clinical opioid withdrawal scale).** Start if COWS ≥ 8 AND one objective sign.

### If Completed Withdrawal:

Typically >72 hrs since last short-acting opioid, may be longer for methadone. Start Bup 4mg q4h prn cravings, usual dose 16-32mg/day. Subsequent days, OK to decrease frequency to qday

## Opioid Analgesics

- Pause opioid pain relievers when starting Bup.
- OK to introduce opioid pain relievers after Bup is started for breakthrough pain. Do not use methadone with Bup.

## Supportive Medications

- Can be used as needed while waiting for withdrawal or during induction process.

## Pregnancy

- Bup monoproduct or Bup/Nx OK in pregnancy.
- Consider referencing buprenorphine in pregnancy guide.

The Bridge Program disseminates resources developed by an interdisciplinary team based on published evidence and medical expertise. These resources are not a substitute for clinical judgment or medical advice. Adherence to the guidance in these resources will not ensure successful patient treatments. Current best practices may change. Providers are responsible for assessing the care and needs of individual patients.

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# Buprenorphine (Bup) Hospital Quick Start

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