



Opioid Tapering Tool



**West Virginia
Safe & Effective Management of Pain
Guidelines**

General Considerations

- Determine if the goal is to reduce or discontinue the opioid medication.
- Gradual tapering can take 2 to 6 months (Some may benefit from longer time frame of 18 to 24 months) and is best for avoiding withdrawal symptoms.
- More rapid tapering is possible and sometimes desired, with an emphasis on monitoring for withdrawal symptoms.
- Formulations that offer smaller dose increments are useful for more gradual tapers, especially once in the lower end of the dosage range.
- Consult with pain management specialists as needed.

Tapering Timeline

Initial dose reductions in the range of 10% every 1 to 2+ weeks.



Once 1/3 of original dose is reached, smaller reductions (5% every 2 to 4 weeks) may be useful.



If discontinuing opioid, the final 20-60 MME may require more time.

Opioid Withdrawal Symptoms & Treatments

Pain
NSAID and/or Acetaminophen

Diarrhea
Loperamide

Nausea/Vomiting
Dimenhydrinate

Anxiety
Hydroxyzine

Insomnia
Sleep Hygiene

Tachycardia
Clonidine