Government of Western Australia
North Metropolitan Health Service
Women and Newborn Health Service

ADULT MEDICATION GUIDELINE	
BUPRENORPHINE	
Scope (Staff):	All WNHS Staff
Scope (Area):	Obstetrics and Gynaecology
This document should be read in conjunction with the Disclaimer.	

Quick Links

Dose	Administration	Monitoring	Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Restrictions

Formulary: Restricted

HIGH RISK Medication ⚠

Medication Class

Opioid

Presentation

Sublingual Tablet: 200 microg

Patch: 5 microg/hr, 10 microg/hr, 15 microg/hr, 30 microg/hr

Ampoule: 300 microg/mL

Products for opioid dependence:

Sublingual Tablet: 400 microg, 2 mg, 8 mg

Sublingual Film (combination with naloxone): 2mg/0.5mg, 8mg/2mg

Storage

Store at room temperature, below 25°C

Schedule 8 Medication

Dose

Moderate-to-severe pain

Acute Pain

Sublingual: 200 – 400 microg every 6 to 8 hours

IM/IV: 300 – 600 microg every 6 to 8 hours

Chronic Pain

Patch: Seek specialist advice if the patient is already taking an opioid.

Opioid-naive, initially, apply a 5 micrograms/hour patch. Titrate dose to effect by adding a second patch or changing to a higher strength patch. Maximum 40 micrograms/hour.

Do not increase dose at intervals of <3 days.

Change each patch every 7 days.

Opioid Dependence

Refer to KEMH Pharmaceutical and Medicines Management Guideline: Community Programme for Opioid Pharmacotherapy (CPOP) Management in Hospital For more information, please contact KEMH Obstetric Medicines Information Service.

Administration

Sublingual (analgesia)

Place tablet under the tongue and keep in place until dissolved. Do not chew or swallow the tablet.

Sublingual (opioid dependence)

Refer to KEMH Pharmaceutical and Medicines Management Guideline: Community Programme for Opioid Pharmacotherapy (CPOP) Management in Hospital

Patch

Write the date and time of application on the patch with permanent marker, then apply to dry, non-irritated, hairless skin on upper torso. Check the patch is still attached on the days between patch changes.

Remove after 7 days and put a new patch on a different area (avoid re-using the same area for at least 3 weeks).

Heat increases the release of buprenorphine from patch; avoid exposure to external heat sources (including electric blankets, heat pads, heat lamps, saunas, hot baths).

Do not cut or divide patches as this may affect drug release characteristics.

IV injection

Inject undiluted over at least 2 minutes

IM injection

Suitable

Monitoring

Tolerance and dependence, withdrawal effects, sedation and respiratory depression

Pregnancy

1st Trimester: Considered safe to use

2nd Trimester: Considered safe to use

3rd Trimester: Considered safe to use

Breastfeeding

Considered safe to use

Use at the lowest effective dose for the shortest duration possible. Observe the breastfed infant for adverse effects such as excessive drowsiness, poor feeding or sleeping pattern changes

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

KEMH Pharmaceutical & Medicines Management Guidelines:

Community Programme for Opioid Pharmacotherapy (CPOP): Management in Hospital

Restricted Schedule 4 (S4R) and Schedule 8 (S8) Medications

WNHS Clinical Guidelines: O&G

WANDAS

CAHS Clinical Guidelines: Neonatal

Maternal Medication/Substance Use

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

WA Health:

[Guideline on continuation of opioid substitution treatment in hospitals]

References

Australian Medicines Handbook. Buprenorphine. In: Australian Medicines Handbook [Internet]. Adelaide (South Australia): Australian Medicines Handbook; 2022 [cited 2022 Feb 28]. Available from: https://amhonline.amh.net.au/

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia. Buprenorphine. In: Australian Injectable Drugs Handbook [Internet]. [St Leonards, New South Wales]: Health Communication Network; 2022 [cited 2022 Feb 28]. Available from: http://aidh.hcn.com.au

The Royal Women's Hospital. Buprenorphine. In: Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Medicines Guide [Internet]. Parkville (Victoria): The Royal Women's Hospital; 2022 [cited 2022 Feb 02]. Available from: https://thewomenspbmg.org.au/

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NSQHS Standards Applicable:	☒ Std 1: Clinical Governance ☐ Std 2: Partnering with Consumers ☐ Std 3: Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infection ☒ Std 4: Medication Safety			☐ Std 5: Comprehensive Care ☐ Std 6: Communicating for Safety ☐ Std 7: Blood Management ☐ Std 8: Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration	
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