

## Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS)

Circle the number that best describes the patient's signs or symptoms for each item. Rate on just the apparent relationship to opiate withdrawal. For help utilizing this tool, please call MACS at 1-855-337-MACS (6227) for a consultation!

Patient's Name:	Date:			
		Date/Time	Date/Time	Date/Time
<b>Resting Pulse Rate:</b> _____ beats/minute (Measured after patient is sitting / 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				
<b>Sweating:</b> <i>over last ½ hour not accounted for by temperature or patient activity</i> 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				
<b>Restlessness:</b> <i>observation during assessment</i> 0 able to sit still 1 reports difficulty sitting still, but is able to do so 2 frequent shifting or extraneous movement of legs/arms 5 unable to sit still for more than a few seconds				
<b>Pupil size</b> 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				
<b>Bone or Joint aches:</b> <i>If patient was having pain previously, only the additional component attributable to opioid withdrawal is scored</i> 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				
<b>Runny nose or tearing:</b> <i>Not accounted for by cold symptoms or allergies</i> 0 not present 1 nasal stuffiness or unusually moist eyes 2 nose running or tearing 4 nose constantly running or tears streaming down cheek				
<b>GI Upset:</b> <i>over last ½ hour</i> 0 no GI symptoms 1 stomach cramps 2 nausea or loose stool 3 vomiting or diarrhea 5 multiple episodes of diarrhea or vomiting				
<b>Tremors:</b> <i>observation of outstretched hands</i> 0 no tremor 1 tremor can be felt, but not observed 2 slight tremor observable 4 gross tremor or muscle twitching				
<b>Yawning:</b> <i>observation during assessment</i> 0 no yawning 1 yawning once or twice during assessment 2 yawning three or more times during assessment 4 yawning several times/minute				
<b>Anxiety or Irritability</b> 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				
<b>Gooseflesh skin</b> 0 skin is smooth 3 piloerection of skin can be felt or hairs standing up on arms 5 prominent piloerection				
Total scores with observer's initials				
Score: 5-12=mild; 13-24=moderate; 25-36= moderately severe; more than 36=severe withdrawal				

Source: Wesson, D. R., & Ling, W. (2003). The Clinical Opiate Withdrawal Scale (COWS). *J Psychoactive Drugs*, 35(2), 253–9.