



Appendix A: Medications Used in Palliative Care for Dyspnea and Respiratory Secretions

Tailor dose to each patient; those who are elderly, cachectic, debilitated or with renal or hepatic dysfunction may require reduced dosages; consult most current product monograph for this information: <http://www.bc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodpharma/databasdon/index-eng.php>

OPIOIDS ^A						
Generic Name	Trade Name	Available Dosage Forms	Standard Adult Dose (opioid-naïve) ^B	Drug Plan Coverage ^C		Approx. cost per 30 days ^D
				Palliative Care	Fair PharmaCare	
hydromorphone	Dilaudid®, G	IR tabs: 1, 2, 4, 8 mg	0.5-1 mg PO q4h	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$9–18 (G) \$9–18
		Inj: 2 mg/mL	0.25-0.5 mg SC q4h	Yes	Yes	\$1–2 per amp (2 mg/mL)
morphine	MS-IR®, Statex®	IR tabs: 5, 10, 20, 25, 30, 50 mg	2.5-5 mg PO q4h	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$11–21
		Inj: 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 25, 50 mg per mL	Crisis dyspnea: 5 mg IV/SC q5– 2.5-5 mg PO. Titrate to q4h 10 min. Double dose if no effect every third dose	Yes	Yes	\$2 per amp (10 mg/mL)
oxycodone	Oxy IR®, Supeudol®, G IR tabs: 5, 10, 20 mg	IR tabs: 5, 10, 20 mg	2.5-5 mg PO. Titrate to q4h	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$13–25 (G) \$26–53

Morphine Equivalence Table (for chronic dosing)			
DRUG	SC/IV (mg)	PO (mg)	COMMENTS
morphine	10	30 ^A	
hydromorphone	2	4	
oxycodone	not available in Canada	20	

^A Health Canada recommends using a conversion of 10 mg SC/IV morphine = 30 mg PO (1:3) Refer to <http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2010/14603a-eng.php>

BENZODIAZEPINES						
Generic Name	Trade Name	Available Dosage Forms	Standard Adult Dose	Drug Plan Coverage ^c		Approx. cost per 30 days ^d
				Palliative Care	Fair PharmaCare	
lorazepam	Ativan®, G	Tabs: 0.5, 1, 2 mg	0.5-2 mg PO/ sublingual q2-4h PRN	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$0.04–0.08 (G) \$0.04–0.10 per tablet
		Sublingual tabs: 0.5, 1, 2 mg		Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$0.10–0.20 (G) \$0.13–0.25 per tablet
		Inj: 4 mg per mL	0.5-2 mg SC ^e q2-4h PRN	Yes	Yes	\$22.90 per 1 mL vial
midazolam	G	Inj: 1 mg per mL, 5 mg per mL	2.5-5 mg SC ^e q5-15 min prn	Yes, LCA	No	\$0.84/mL (1 mg/mL vial) \$4.43/mL (5 mg/ mL vial)
NEUROLEPTICS						
metho- trimeprazine	G	Tabs: 2, 5, 25, 50 mg	2.5-5 mg PO q8h, titrate to effect	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$5–10 (G)
	Nozinan®	Inj: 25 mg/mL	6.25 mg SC q8h, titrate to effect	Yes	Yes	\$3.74/amp (25 mg/mL)
CORTICOSTEROIDS						
dexamethasone	G	Tabs: 0.5, 0.75, 2, 4 mg	8-24 mg PO/SC ^e /IV every morning, taper if possible	Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$20–59 (G)
		Inj: 4, 10 mg per mL		Yes, LCA	Yes, LCA	\$54–328 (G)
MEDICATIONS FOR RESPIRATORY SECRETIONS						
atropine	G	Inj: 0.4, 0.6 mg per mL	0.2-0.8 mg SC q4h and q1h PRN	Yes	Yes	\$2.50–5 (G) per dose
		Drops: 1% solution	1 to 4 drops sublingual ^e q4h prn	No	Yes	\$3.75 per 5 mL bottle
glycopyrrolate	G	Inj: 0.2 mg per mL	0.2-0.4 mg SC ^e / sublingual ^e /PO ^e q4h to q8h	Yes	Yes	\$26–52 (G) per 24 h

Abbreviations: G generics; h hour; inj injection; IR Immediate Release; PO by mouth; PRN as needed; SC subcutaneous; SR slow release; tabs tablets

^a Not an exhaustive list. Other opioids may be appropriate.

^b For opioid-tolerant patients, increase current dose by 25-50%.

^c PharmaCare coverage as of October 2016 (subject to revision). Obtain current coverage, eligibility, and coverage information from the online BC PharmaCare Formulary Search page at pharmacareformularysearch.gov.bc.ca

^d Cost as of October 2016 and does not include retail markups or pharmacy fees. Generic and brand name cost separated as indicated by (G).

^e This route of administration is used in practice, but not approved for marketing for this indication by Health Canada