

Management of RESTLESSNESS and/or AGITATION in the last days of life – ADULT

IF BENZODIAZEPINE PRESCRIBED FOR RESTLESSNESS & AGITATION, SAME ORDER MAY ALSO BE USED FOR BREATHLESSNESS

Assess patient in the last days of life at least every 4 hours: to allow existing and emerging symptoms to be detected, assessed and treated effectively.
Assess symptoms and if restlessness and/or agitation is present: instigate non-pharmacological measures before medications are introduced e.g. exclude and/or manage urinary retention and constipation; address emotional/psychological/spiritual distress; consider alcohol/nicotine/illicit drug withdrawal and consider management/replacement therapy, give PRN antiemetic as below and assess effectiveness

Patient has NOT been on a regular antipsychotic and/or benzodiazepine

Patient is symptom controlled

Pre-emptively prescribe PRN subcut antipsychotic AND benzodiazepine

First Line
HALOPERIDOL 1mg subcut 4 hourly PRN
max PRN dose in 24hrs = 3mg
(3 PRN doses)

AND Second Line
MIDAZOLAM 2.5mg subcut 2 hourly PRN
max PRN dose in 24hrs = 15mg
(6 PRN doses)

Assess response and initiate further intervention if symptoms remain uncontrolled

Review symptom control at least daily
If 3 or more effective PRN doses required in previous 24 hours, prescribe regular HALOPERIDOL

CAUTIONS & CONTRINDICATIONS

HALOPERIDOL

- Do not use in Parkinson's Disease or Lewy Body Dementia
- Watch for extrapyramidal side effects (repetitive and involuntary movements, abnormal restlessness and parkinsonism including tremor, rigidity, bradykinesia)

Refer to prescribing guide for further information

Patient is restless and/or agitated

Prescribe regular subcut antipsychotic

EITHER

HALOPERIDOL 1mg subcut regularly 12 hourly

OR

HALOPERIDOL 2mg subcut in 24 hr syringe driver

Also prescribe PRN subcut antipsychotic AND benzodiazepine

First Line
HALOPERIDOL 1mg subcut 4 hourly PRN
max PRN dose in 24hrs = 3mg
(3 PRN doses)

AND Second Line
MIDAZOLAM 2.5mg subcut 2 hourly PRN
max PRN dose in 24hrs = 15mg
(6 PRN doses)

Assess response and initiate further intervention if symptoms remain uncontrolled

Review symptom control at least daily
If 3 or more effective PRN doses required in previous 24 hours, add regular BENZODIAZEPINE in addition to regular HALOPERIDOL

Patient HAS been on a regular ORAL antipsychotic and/or benzodiazepine
If patient is been on antipsychotic for other indication, seek Specialist advice

Patient is restless and/or agitated

Prescribe regular subcut benzodiazepine IN ADDITION TO regular subcut antipsychotic

HALOPERIDOL

1mg subcut regularly 12 hourly OR 2mg subcut in 24 hr syringe driver

AND

MIDAZOLAM 10mg subcut in 24 hr syringe driver OR CLONAZEPAM 0.5mg subcut regularly 12 hourly

Also prescribe PRN subcut antipsychotic AND benzodiazepine

First Line
HALOPERIDOL 1mg subcut 4 hourly PRN max
PRN dose in 24hrs = 3mg (3 PRN doses) AND

Second Line
MIDAZOLAM 2.5mg subcut 2 hourly PRN
max PRN dose in 24hrs = 15mg (6 PRN doses)

Assess response and initiate further intervention if symptoms remain uncontrolled

Review symptom control at least daily, or more often if symptoms uncontrolled
If 3 or more effective PRN doses required in previous 24 hours, increase dose of regular dose of either HALOPERIDOL or BENZODIAZEPINE by 50%, depending on response to PRN medication
Seek further advice from local Specialist Palliative Care Team

Patient is symptom controlled

Prescribe regular subcut antipsychotic

EITHER

HALOPERIDOL 1mg subcut regularly 12 hourly

OR

HALOPERIDOL 2mg subcut in 24hr in syringe driver

Also prescribe PRN subcut antipsychotic AND benzodiazepine

First Line
HALOPERIDOL 1mg subcut 4 hourly PRN
max PRN dose in 24hrs = 3mg
(3 PRN doses)

AND

Second Line
MIDAZOLAM 2.5mg subcut 2 hourly PRN
max PRN dose in 24hrs = 15mg
(6 PRN doses)

Assess response and initiate further intervention if symptoms remain uncontrolled

Review symptom control at least daily
If 3 or more effective PRN doses required in previous 24 hours, add regular BENZODIAZEPINE in addition to regular HALOPERIDOL

