



OPIOID INTOLERANCE DECISION ALGORITHM

Always Check for drug allergy before prescribing, dispensing and administering drugs

Does the patient have any known allergies?

YES

NO

Confirm with the patient and document "NKA" =
No Known Allergy

When patients say they're allergic to an opioid, are all opioid analgesics off limits? The key is getting a detailed description of the reaction. Answer the questions below and follow the instructions to find the best options for your patient.

Check the symptoms the patient describes, and follow the instructions in the far right column.

Flushing, itching, hives, sweating, and/or mild hypotension only	Go to A
Itching, flushing, or hives at injection or application site only	Go to A
Severe hypotension	Go to B
Skin reaction other than itching, flushing, or hives (e.g., rash)	Go to B
Breathing, speaking, or swallowing difficulties	Go to B
Swelling of face, lips, mouth, tongue, pharynx, or larynx	Go to B

A

These symptoms **may** be due to a **pseudoallergy**. It's a result of histamine release, a pharmacologic side effect of some opioids. Options for this patient include:

1. A nonopioid analgesic (e.g., Acetaminophen, an NSAID)
2. Avoidance of Codeine, Morphine, and Meperidine, the opioids most commonly associated with pseudoallergy
3. Use of a more potent opioid less likely to release histamine. Potency, from lower to higher: **Meperidine less than Codeine less than Morphine less than Oxycodone less than HYDROmorphone less than FentaNYL**
4. If needed, concurrent administration of an antihistamine...an H1 (e.g., DiphenhydrAMINE) and perhaps an H2 blocker (e.g., Ranitidine)
5. Dose reduction, if tolerated

B

This patient **may** have experienced a **true allergy**. Options for this patient include:

1. A nonopioid analgesic (e.g., acetaminophen, an NSAID)
2. An opioid in a chemical class *different* from the one to which the patient reacted, with close monitoring:
 - **Phenylpiperidines**: Meperidine, FentaNYL, SUFentanil, Remifentanil.
 - **Diphenylheptanes**: Methadone
 - **Morphine group**: Codeine, Morphine, Oxycodone, HYDROmorphone, **PERCOCET** (Acetaminophen/ Oxycodone), **TYLENOL #3** (Acetaminophen/ Codeine), **FEVADOL PLUS or SOLPADINE** (Acetaminophen/ Codeine/ Caffeine)
 - **Other** : TraMADol is contraindicated in patients with opioid allergy per U.S. and Canadian product labeling; however there is **NOT** good evidence for cross-sensitivity of TraMADol with opioids. Experts recommend using TraMADol **ONLY** for patients who have mild reactions to opioids.