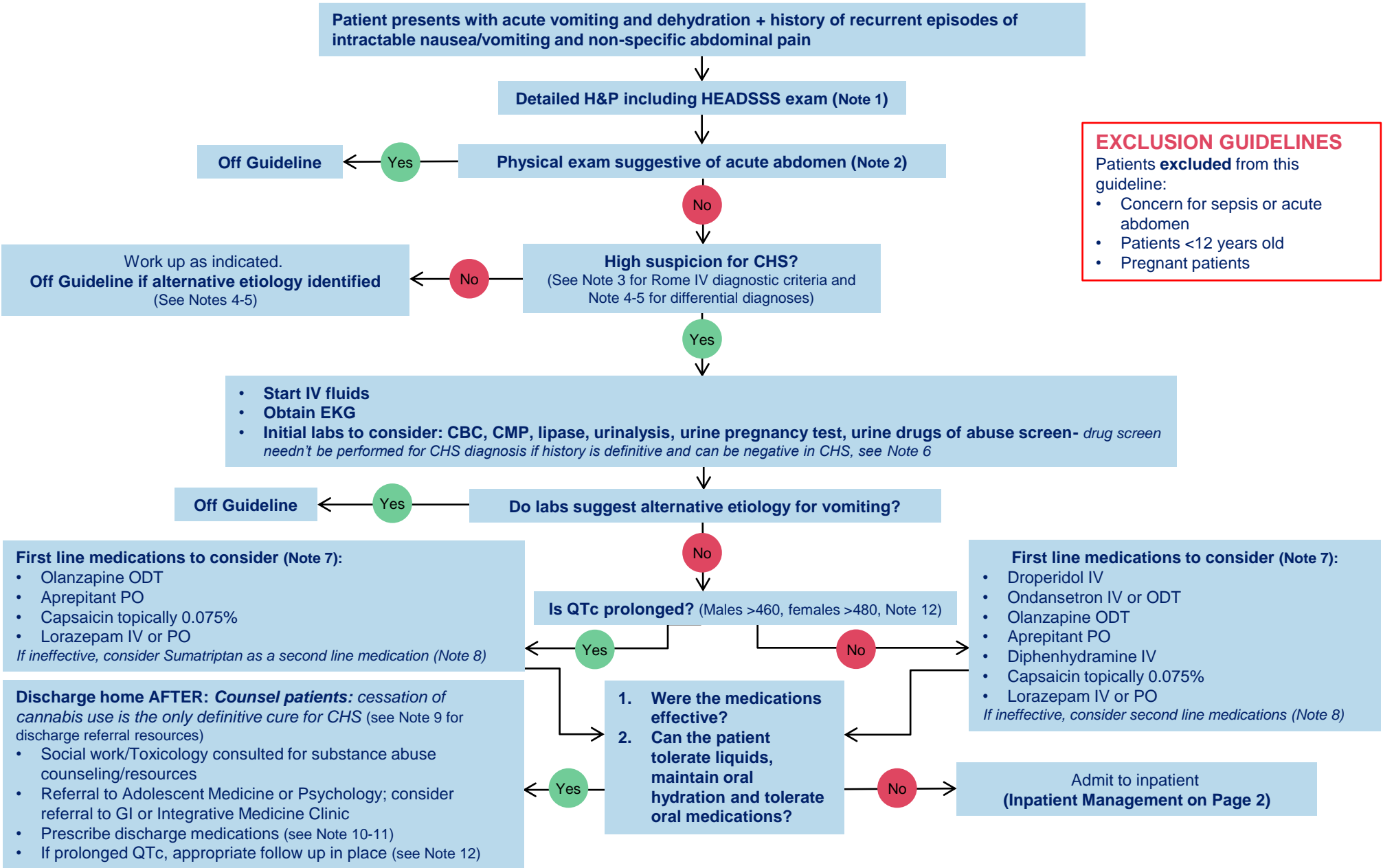


Aim: to standardize the diagnosis and management of Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome in adolescents

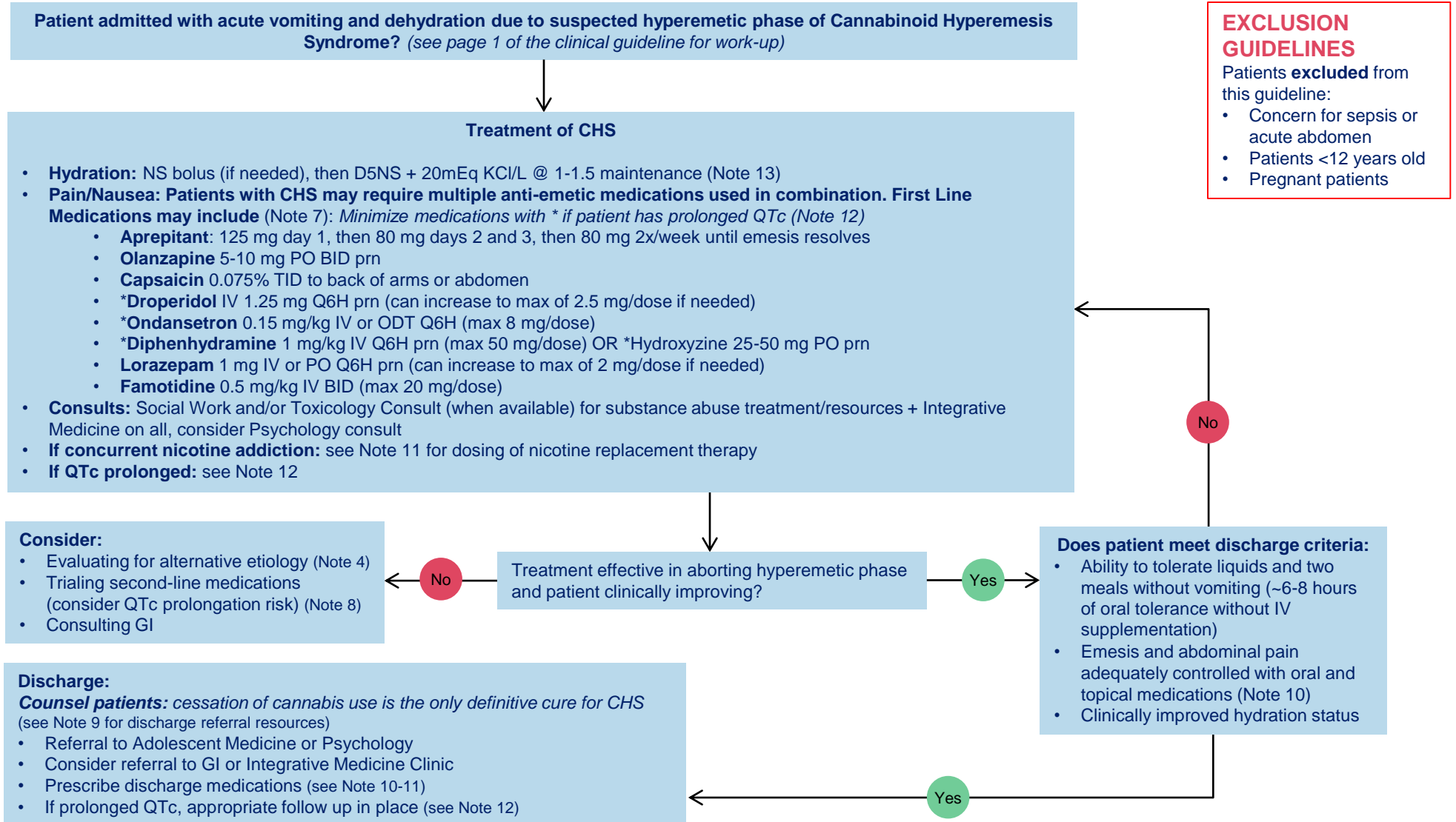


**EXCLUSION GUIDELINES**

Patients **excluded** from this guideline:

- Concern for sepsis or acute abdomen
- Patients <12 years old
- Pregnant patients

Aim: to standardize the diagnosis and management of Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome in adolescents



**Note 1. Thorough History.** A complete history should be obtained with special attention to:

- **Duration of symptoms:**
  - **CHS prodromal phase** can last months-years: often characterized by early morning nausea, fear of vomiting, and frequent abdominal discomfort, but patients **maintain** normal eating habits. Patients may continue or further increase cannabis use hoping it will relieve nausea
  - **CHS hyperemetic phase** is characterized by paroxysmal bouts of vomiting that can be incapacitating, sometimes associated with nonspecific abdominal pain, average duration is 3-4 days, weight loss is common (>50% report weight loss >5kg)
- **Relieving factors:** hot showers/baths are pathognomonic for providing temporary relief in CHS (however, such hydro-thermotherapy can also be relieving in up to 50% of pts with cyclic vomiting syndrome), if the patient has had CHS exacerbations in the past then inquire which pharmacotherapy has been previously beneficial. Typical antiemetics like Ondansetron are often ineffective
- **Onset of symptoms** and time of last cannabis consumption: usually patients with CHS present symptomatically within 24 hours of last consumption
- **Cannabis use:** inquire about cannabis product used (e.g. synthetic, edible, vaping, botanical, prescription), duration, quantity and frequency of use. Most patients with CHS have consumed cannabis at least weekly for months-years, often with a history of escalation of dosing.
- **Mental health evaluation:** ask about co-abuse of other substances, assess for addiction, inquire about history of mental health concerns and treatment, and assess patient's current state of mental health
- **Red flag symptoms** that suggest alternative etiology include (see note 4 for ddx): high fever, abrupt onset with this episode being the first occurrence of symptoms, history of bloody stools

**Note 2. Signs of an acute abdomen may include:** guarding, rigidity, non-distractable pain, abdominal distension, vital sign instability, and/or fever

**Note 3. Rome IV Criteria for CHS diagnosis** (of note, criteria were developed for diagnosing adults):

1. Stereotypical episodic vomiting resembling cyclic vomiting syndrome in terms of onset, duration, and frequency, i.e. two or more periods of unremitting paroxysmal vomiting, lasting hours to days, and separated by weeks-months with return to baseline health between episodes of vomiting
2. Presentation after prolonged use of cannabis
3. Relief of vomiting episodes by sustained cessation of cannabis use

*Criteria fulfilled for the last 3 months with symptom onset at least 6 months prior to diagnosis*

**Note 4. Differential diagnoses to consider for intractable nausea/vomiting and abdominal pain – this list is not exhaustive and cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome is ultimately a diagnosis of exclusion. Even if a patient has a history of cannabis use or a positive tox screen, alternative pathologies should be considered.**

- **Gastrointestinal system etiologies:** gastroenteritis, peptic ulcer disease, appendicitis, gallbladder pathology (e.g. cholecystitis), Inflammatory Bowel Disease, cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome, bowel obstruction, pancreatitis, cyclic vomiting syndrome (CVS)
- **Central nervous system etiologies:** elevated ICP, concussion, vertebral injury, migraines, dysautonomia, vestibular concerns
- **Genitourinary system etiologies:** nephrolithiasis, pregnancy hyperemesis, ectopic pregnancy, pelvic inflammatory disease, ovarian/testicular torsion, UTI
- **Metabolic/endocrinological etiologies:** toxin ingestion, metabolic/mitochondrial disorders, DKA, thyroid disease, endocrine tumors
- **Psychiatric etiologies:** cannabis withdrawal syndrome (see note 5), eating disorder, rumination syndrome

**Note 5. Key clinical history information to help differentiate cannabis withdrawal from cannabinoid hyperemesis**

	Cannabis Withdrawal	Cannabinoid Hyperemesis
Symptomatic relief with hot showers/baths?	No	Yes
Onset of symptoms from last cannabis consumption	>24 hours	<24 hours
Associated psychological symptoms, e.g. irritability, restlessness, insomnia, nervousness	Yes	No
Clinical course/pattern	No defined pattern. Symptoms occur when patient attempts to abstain.	Three clear phases of symptoms (prodrome, hyperemetic, recovery). Possible hx of escalation of THC dose to combat tolerance.
Quantity of cannabis consumed correlates with severity?	Yes	No

**Note 6. Urine drugs of abuse screen:**

- At Children's MN, the "Drugs of Abuse Screen, Urine" results in ~1 hour. In contrast, the "Drug Screen, Comprehensive Urine (MedTox)" on urine or blood results in ~10-14 days and is rarely indicated. The "Drugs of Abuse Screen, Urine" includes a test for Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), but will not detect CBD, cannabidiol (Epidiolex), or synthetic cannabis. A drug screen cannot be used in place of a thorough history.
- New versus residual marijuana use:** Since marijuana is lipophilic and has a long elimination half-life, it can be detected in urine for weeks to months after stopping usage. If a patient has a positive urine drug screen, but history is indeterminate, and a provider needs to distinguish between new usage of marijuana versus residual positivity, they can use a urine creatine normalized carboxy-tetrahydrocannabinol concentration at two points in time and calculate a decision ratio based on these values. At Children's MN, this can be obtained by ordering "miscellaneous lab" and specifying in the comments "Mayo Lab: Mayo Test Code = THCCR" on two separate urine samples and then using the [Mayo Lab Manual](#) to interpret the results.

**Note 7. Pharmacological Management of CHS – First Line for nausea/vomiting in CHS hyperemetic phase**

*Suggested First Line Medications to try in CHS- dosing and tips. Medications with different mechanisms may be utilized in combination. If the patient has a history of known CHS, initiate treatment trialing what has worked for them in the past.*

Medication	Dose	Notes	QTc prolonging?*
<b>Droperidol</b>	1.25 mg IV Q6 hours prn (can increase to max of 2.5 mg/dose if needed).	If using, monitor for extrapyramidal side effects and order prn Benadryl.  Some institutions recommend Haloperidol as a first-line, however based on expert pharmacist opinion, Droperidol is being recommended at Children's MN due to lower risk of potential QTc prolongation and extrapyramidal side effects  <b>If scheduled, providers should order Q48H EKGs for monitoring</b>	Mild
<b>Olanzapine</b>	5-10 mg ODT BID prn	IV route not yet FDA approved in pediatrics, IM is also an option in an urgent situation	Rare
<b>Aprepitant</b>	125 mg PO day 1, then 80 mg PO days 2 and 3, after that 2x/week until symptoms cease	Time to onset: 1 hour	None
<b>Diphenhydramine</b>	1 mg/kg IV Q6H prn (max 50 mg/dose)	May not be helpful in CHS. Should be ordered prn if using Droperidol to treat rare extrapyramidal side effects	Rare
<b>Hydroxyzine</b>	25-50 mg q6h PO prn (max 100mg/dose)	May be useful for concurrent anxiety	Mild
<b>Capsaicin</b>	0.075% TID prn	May not be tolerated. Use gloves for application to back of arms or abdomen. Thoroughly wash hands after application. Avoid face and eyes. Discontinue if any skin irritation/burning.	None
<b>Lorazepam</b>	1 mg IV or PO Q6H prn (can increase to max of 2 mg/dose if needed)	Preferable not to discharge home with Lorazepam due to risk for abuse in the outpatient setting.	None
<b>Famotidine</b>	0.5 mg/kg IV or PO BID (max 20 mg/dose)		Rare
<b>Ondansetron</b>	0.15 mg/kg IV or ODT Q6H (max 8 mg)	May not be helpful in CHS. Consider a trial dose and schedule Ondansetron only if benefit observed. Could also try granisetron (2 mg IV BID), a similar 5-HT3 antagonist.	Mild

*\*Risk factors for QTc prolongation include using multiple QTc prolonging medications together, hepatic dysfunction, electrolytes abnormalities (hypomagnesemia, hypokalemia, hypocalcemia), congenital long QT syndrome, left ventricular failure, bradycardia, or recent cardioversion. See Note 12.*

**Note 8. Pharmacological Management of CHS – Second Line for nausea/vomiting**

Medication	Dose	Notes	QTc prolonging*?
Prochlorperazine	5 mg PO or IV Q6H prn	If using, monitor for extrapyramidal side effects and order prn Benadryl.	Rare
Sumatriptan	20 mg intranasal once prn	May repeat once after 1 hour if partial response	None
Amitriptyline	0.5 mg/kg/day (max 200 mg/day)	Caution in patients with any depression or suicidality risk given the high mortality/morbidity of any overdose	Significant

*\*Risk factors for QTc prolongation include using multiple QTc prolonging medications together, hepatic dysfunction, electrolytes abnormalities (hypomagnesemia, hypokalemia, hypocalcemia), congenital long QT syndrome, left ventricular failure, bradycardia, or recent cardioversion. See Note 12.*

**Note 9. Discharge Resources**

- Referrals for patients with substance abuse disorder may include: Psychology and/or Adolescent Medicine clinic
- For intensive outpatient addiction treatment, consider looking into Hazelden at the Plymouth location: <https://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/treatment/models/specialized-programs/teens-young-adults>
- For faith-based treatment for boys, consider Teen Challenge (<https://www.mntc.org/>)
- For assistance finding a local treatment facility for mental or substance use disorders: <https://findtreatment.gov/locator>
- If concurrent nicotine addiction, quitting resources include:
  - [Minnesota Department of Health free Quit Support](#)
  - <https://truthinitiative.org/>
  - <https://teen.smokefree.gov/>
  - [Mylifemyquit.com](http://Mylifemyquit.com)
  - Texting 36072 to take the first step towards quitting

**Note 10. Discharge Medications may include:**

Medication	Dose	Notes
Capsaicin	0.075% TID prn	Use gloves for application to back of arms or abdomen. Thoroughly wash hands after application. Avoid face and eyes. Discontinue if any skin irritation/burning.
Aprepitant	125 mg day 1, then 80 mg days 2 and 3, after that 2x/week until symptoms cease	
Famotidine	0.5 mg/kg PO BID (max 20 mg/dose) x 2 weeks	
Olanzapine	5-10 mg PO BID prn	If found to be beneficial, may discharge with a few doses
Hydroxyzine*	25-50 mg q6h PO prn (max 100mg/dose)	May be useful for concurrent anxiety
Ondansetron*	0.15 mg/kg PO Q6H (max 8 mg)	Only if found to be beneficial
N-acetylcysteine	1,200 mg PO BID	If recommended by Toxicology Specialist to treat patient's substance use disorder in the outpatient setting

\*Avoid in patients with prolonged QTc. See Note 12.

**Note. 11. Dosing for Nicotine Replacement Therapy**

*If concurrent nicotine addiction, consider prescribing nicotine replacement therapy*

**Suggested Dosing:**

- If >10 cigarettes per day OR 1+ pods per day of e-cigarettes: 21 mg x 4-6 weeks, then 14 mg/day x 2 weeks → 7 mg/day x 2 weeks
- If <10 cigarettes per day OR 0.5-1 pod per day of e-cigarettes: 14 mg/day x 6 weeks → 7 mg/day x 2 weeks
- If a "few hits" per day: 7 mg patch x 2 weeks
- Nicotine lozenge (2 mg Q2H prn, max 8 mg/day)

**Note 12. Patients with QTc prolongation (Males >460, females >480 for the purpose of this guideline and proper medication administration per cardiology)**

- Correct any electrolyte derangements that may be contributing to QTc prolongation (e.g. hypokalemia, hypomagnesemia, hypocalcemia)
- If QTc is above normal but <500 and patient is meeting discharge criteria: EKG should be repeated as an outpatient within 2 weeks
  - If QTc remains prolonged at follow-up, patient should be referred to outpatient Cardiology Clinic.
- If QTc >500 even after electrolyte derangements are corrected and QTc-prolonging medications are held, consult Cardiology.

**Note 13. IV fluids for Hyperemesis Cannabinoid Syndrome**

THC is stored in adipocytes, so fasting-induced lipolysis is thought to exacerbate the hyperemetic phase of CHS. Dextrose-containing maintenance fluids are important to minimize ongoing lipolysis. D10 should be considered in patients presenting with prolonged vomiting (e.g. >3 days) or ketonemia.



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