

IT'S ABOUT PAIN

WHAT IS THE MED ALL ABOUT?

Morphine Equivalent Dose (MED) is used to compare the power of various opioids. It is important when changing medications.

For example, Fred takes 3 hydrocodone/APAP 10 mg tablets daily, with good pain relief, but nausea is intolerable. What is the equivalent dose of a different opioid?

The conversion numbers are:

- Morphine: 1
- Hydrocodone: 1
- Oxycodone: 1.5
- Methadone: 3
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid): 4
- Oxymorphone (Opana): 3
- Tramadol (Ultram): 0.1
- Codeine: 0.15
- Tapentadol (Nucynta): 0.4
- Fentanyl patch: 2.4

So, Fred's 30 mg daily dose of hydrocodone would be the equivalent to 20 mg of oxycodone ($20 \times 1.5 = 30$), or 10 mg of oxymorphone ($10 \times 3 = 30$), or 7.5 mg of hydromorphone ($4 \times 7.5 = 30$).

If Jonathan uses a 50 mg Fentanyl patch once every 3 days, his MED is $50 \times 2.4 = 120$.

Sally, who is taking 20 mg of methadone twice daily, would also have an MED of 120 ($20 \times 2 \times 3 = 120$).

If Anthony takes morphine long acting 30 mg at bedtime and oxycodone 10 mg 4 times daily, his MED would be $30 \times 1 \times 1$ for morphine and $4 \times 10 \times 1.5 = 60$ for oxycodone, for a total of $30 + 60 = 90$.

Per Washington State law, if a patient's opioid dose is 120 MED or more, they should be referred to a pain clinic, unless the dose is stable and is giving good pain relief and good function.

What is your MED?