

Table 4-7: Opioid Analgesics for Moderate to Severe Pain in AIDS

Analgesic	Route	Equi-Analgesic Dose (MG)	**Oral Morphine Equivalents (MG)	Analgesic Onset (HRS)	Duration (HRS)	Plasma Half-Life (HRS)	COMMENTS
Morphine	PO IM, IV, SC	30-60* 10	30-60 10	1-1½ ½-1	4-6 3-6	2-3	Standard of comparison for the narcotic analgesics.*
Morphine (sustained release)	PO	90-120	90-120	1-1½	8-12	—	Now available in long-acting sustained release forms.
Oxycodone	PO	20-30	30-45	1	3-6	2-3	In combination with aspirin or acetaminophen it is considered a weaker opioid, as a single agent it is comparable to the strong opioids, like morphine. Available in immediate release and sustained release preparation.
Oxycodone (sustained release)	PO	20-40	30-60	1	8-12	2-3	
Hydromorphone	PO IM, IV	7.5 1.5	30-40 15-20	½ - 1 ¼ - ½	3-4 3-4	2-3 2-3	Short half-life; ideal for elderly patients. Comes in suppository and injectable forms.
Methadone	PO IM, IV	20 10	80 80	½ - 1 ½ - 1	4-8 —	15-30 15-30	Long half-life; tends to accumulate with initial dosing, requires careful titration. Good oral potency.
Levorphanol	PO IM	4 2	30-60 30-60	½ - 1½ ½ - 1	3-6	12-16 12-16	Long half-life; requires careful dose titration in first week. Note that analgesic duration is only 3-6 hours.
Meperidine	PO IM	300 75	30-60 30-60	½ - 1½ ½ - 1	3-6 3-4	3-4 3-4	Active toxic metabolite, or meperidine, tends to accumulate (plasma half-life is 3-4 hours), especially with renal impairment and in elderly patients causing delirium, myoclonus and seizures.
Fentanyl	TD IV	0.1 0.1	24-30 24-30	12-18	48-72 —	20-22 —	Transdermal patch is convenient, bypassing GI analgesia until depot is formed. Not suitable for rapid titration.

PO=per oral; IM=intramuscular; IV=intravenous; SC=subcutaneous; TD=transdermal

*30mg for repeat around-the-clock dosing; 60mg for single dose or intermittent dosing.

** Oral morphine equivalents are estimated ranges calculated based on Pereira J, Lawlor P, Viganò A, Bruera E. Equianalgesic dose ratios for opioids: a critical review and proposals for long-term dosing. *J Pain Symptom Manage*, 22:622-87, 2001.