

## High-Risk Medications in the Elderly

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contracted with the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) to develop clinical strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of care provided to Medicare beneficiaries. The NCQA's Geriatric Measurement Advisory Panel identified several categories of medications that have an increased risk of adverse effects to elderly patients. The enclosed chart identifies several key medication categories that CMS and NCQA are monitoring.

In an effort to ensure patients' safety, many of our clients have established pre-authorization protocols for those prescriptions for high risk medications in patients older than 65 years of age. Since pharmacists have a very important role in patient care, we want you to be part of this safety initiative. **We strongly encourage that you contact the prescriber when your elderly patient is requesting a new or refilled prescription of a high-risk medication listed on the below chart.**

Category	High Risk Medications	Alternatives
<b>Analgesics</b>	butalbital/APAP butalbital/APAP/caffeine (ESGIC, FIORICET) butalbital/APAP/caffeine/codeine butalbital/ASA/caffeine (FIORINAL) butalbital/ASA/caffeine/codeine ketorolac (TORADOL) indomethacin (INDOCIN) meperidina (DEMEROL) pentazocine (TALWIN) pentazocine/APAP	<b>Mild Pain:</b> acetaminophen, codeine, short-term NSAIDs <b>Moderate/Severe Pain:</b> tramadol (ULTRAM), tramadol/APAP* (ULTRACET), morphine sulfate (MS CONTIN), hydrocodone/APAP (VICODIN, etc.), oxycodone (OXYIR), oxycodone/APAP (PERCOCET), fentanyl patch (DURAGESIC), OXYCONTIN <b>Neuropathic Pain:</b> duloxetine (CYMBALTA), pregabalin (LYRICA), gabapentin (NEURONTIN), desipramine (NORPRAMIN), nortriptyline (PAMELOR), topical agents (capsaicin, topical lidocaine)
<b>Anti-anxiety</b>	aspirin/meprobamate (EQUAGESIC) meprobamate (EQUINIL)	<b>Anxiety:</b> SSRI, SNRI, buspirone (BUSPAR)
<b>Antidepressants</b>	amitriptyline (ELAVIL) amitriptyline/chlordiazepoxide (LIMBITROL DS) perphenazine/amitriptyline (ETRAFON) clomipramine (ANAFRANIL) doxepin (> 6mg/d) (SINEQUAN) imipramine (TOFRANIL) trimipramine (SURMONTIL)	<b>TCAs:</b> nortriptyline (PAMELOR), desipramine (NORPRAMIN), trazodone (DESYREL) <b>Depression:</b> SSRI, SNRI, mirtazapine (REMERON, REMERON SOLTAB), bupropion (WELLBUTRIN) <b>Neuropathic Pain:</b> duloxetine (CYMBALTA), pregabalin (LYRICA), gabapentin (NEURONTIN), capsaicin <b>Insomnia:</b> sleep hygiene therapy, melatonin, ROZEREM tab 8mg, low-dose doxepin (suspension), SILENOR tab 3mg and 6mg, Temazepam
<b>Gastrointestinal</b>	trimethobenzamide (TIGAN) phenobarbital/belladonna alkaloids (DONNATAL)	granisetron (KYTRIL), ondansetron (ZOFRAN) <b>Constipation:</b> fiber, psyllium, polyethylene glycol (MIRALAX) <b>Diarrhea:</b> loperamide (IMODIUM), aluminum hydroxide, cholestyramine
<b>First Generation Antihistamines</b>	brompheniramine carbinoxamine chlorpheniramine clemastine cyproheptadine dexbrompheniramine dexchlorpheniramine diphenhydramine (oral) doxylamine hydroxyzine promethazine triprolidine	Please refer to the formulary for other options or call our clinical pharmacist at (787) 200-1689.
<b>Oral Hypoglycemic</b>	chlorpropamide (DIABINESE, INSULASE) glyburide (MICRONASE, GLYNASE, DIABETA) glyburide/metformin (GLUCOVANCE)	glimepiride (AMARYL) glipizide (GLUCOTROL)

Category	High Risk Medications	Alternatives
Anti-Parkinson Agents	benztropine (COGENTIN) trihexiphenidyl (ARTANE)	<b>Parkinson's disease:</b> bromocriptine (CYCLOSET), EMSAM, levodopa/carbidopa (SINEMET) pramipexole (MIRAPEX), ropinirole (REQUIP), COMTAN, STALEVO
Antiplatelet Agents	dipyridamole, short-acting (PERSANTINE) ticlopidine (TICLID)	clopidogrel (PLAVIX), low-dose aspirin
Antipsychotics	thioridazine (MELLARIL)	haloperidol (HALDOL), olanzapine (ZYPREXA), risperidone (RISPERDAL), ABILIFY, FANAPT, ziprasidone (GEODON), GEODON INJ, INVEGA, SAPHRIS, SEROQUEL XR
Sedative-Hypnotics	Barbiturates: butabarbital (BUTISOL) phenobarbital (LUMINAL) secobarbital (SECONAL) Non-Benzodiazepines (> 90 days): zolpidem (AMBIEN) eszopiclone (LUNESTA) zaleplon (SONATA) Other: chloral hydrate	sleep hygiene therapy melatonin ROZEREM tab 8mg low-dose doxepin (suspension) SILENOR tab 3mg and 6mg Temazepam
Cardiac Agents	digoxin > 0.125 mg/d (LANOXIN) disopyramide (NORPACE) guanfacine (TENEX, INTUNIV) methyldopa (ALDOMET) methyldopa/hydrochlorothiazide (ALDORIL) nifedipine (short-acting), (PROCARDIA)	dose reduction, with monitoring rate control preferred for atrial fibrillation Low dose thiazide or a second generation calcium channel blocker OR ACE inhibitor, ARB, beta-blocker or combination product based on specific chronic conditions
Estrogens  (oral, transdermal)  with or without progestin	conjugated estrogen (PREMARIN, CENESTIN, ENJUVIA) conjugated estrogen/medroxyprogesterone (PREMPHASE, PREMPRO) esterified estrogen (MENEST) esterified estrogen/methyltestosterone (COVARYX, ESTRATEST) estradiol (ESTRACE, ESTROGEL, CLIMARA) estropipate (OGEN, ORTHO-EST) estradiol/norethindrone (ACTIVEVELLA, COMBIPATCH) ethinyl estradiol/norethindrone (FEMHRT, JINTELI) estradiol/drospirenone (ANGELIQ) estradiol/levonorgestrel (CLIMARA PRO) estradiol/norgestimate (PREFEST)	<b>Bone Density:</b> alendronate (FOSAMAX), ibandronate (BONIVA), EVISTA <b>Hot Flashes:</b> non-drug therapy <b>Vaginal Symptoms:</b> vaginal estrogen cream
Skeletal Muscle Relaxants	ASA/caffeine/orphenadrine ASA/carisoprodol/codeine ASA/carisoprodol, carisoprodol (SOMA) chlorzoxazone (PARAFON FORTE, LORZONE) cyclobenzaprine (AMRIX, FEXMID, FLEXERIL) metaxalone (SKELAXIN) methocarbamol (ROBAXIN) orphenadrine (NORFLEX)	<b>Physiotherapy:</b> baclofen* (LIORESAL), tizanidine (ZANAFLEX) (as long as no dementia, delirium, BPH, cognitive impairment, constipation)
Other (thyroid drug; urinary anti-infective; progestins)	thyroid desiccated (ARMOUR THYROID) nitrofurantoin (FURADANTIN) nitrofurantoin macrocrystals (MACRODANTIN) nitrofurantoin macrocrystals-monohydrate (MACROBID) megestrol (MEGACE, MEGACE ES)	Hypothyroid: levothyroxine (SYNTHROID), levoxyl Urinary Tract Infections: ciprofloxacin (CIPRO), trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (BACTRIM DS), culture specific antibiotic For Depressed Patients: Low dose mirtazapine (REMERON) For Loss of appetite: dronabinol (MARINOL)