

2017 High-Risk Medication

Therapeutic Alternatives Guide



BlueAdvantage (PPO)SM
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As part of ongoing efforts focused on quality and safety, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee would like to partner with you to avoid using medications considered high risk for those 65 years of age and older, especially when there may be safer alternatives.

High-risk medications (HRMs) are those identified by the American Geriatric Society and by the Pharmacy Quality Alliance that may cause adverse events in older adults due to their pharmacologic properties and the physiologic changes of aging.

You are in the best position to help reduce medication-associated health problems. This guide provides formulary alternatives that may be used in place of high-risk drugs.

We encourage you to use this guide to help determine a safe alternative for your patients as medically appropriate. We look forward to partnering with you to ensure optimal outcomes for them.

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Allergy medications: diphenhydramine oral elixir hydroxyzine hcl</p>	<p>Anticholinergic effects such as confusion, dry mouth and constipation</p> <p>Clearance reduced with advanced age</p> <p>Tolerance develops when used as hypnotic</p> <p>Use of diphenhydramine in certain situations such as acute treatment of a severe allergic reaction may be appropriate</p>	<p>For allergies: cetirizine oral solution desloratadine tablet desloratadine tablet, disintegrating levocetirizine oral solution levocetirizine tablet fluticasone nasal spray flunisolide nasal spray mometasone nasal spray</p> <p>Diphenhydramine for sleep: Rozerem trazodone</p> <p>Hydroxyzine for anxiety: buspirone escitalopram sertraline venlafaxine</p>

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Antidepressant medications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> amitriptyline clomipramine doxepin capsule >6 mg/d doxepin oral concentrate >6mg/d imipramine trimipramine 	<p>Anticholinergic effects, sedation and orthostatic hypotension</p>	<p>For depression:</p> <p>SSRI (except paroxetine) – citalopram, escitalopram, fluoxetine, sertraline</p> <p>SNRI–duloxetine (caution with renal dysfunction), Pristiq, venlafaxine, bupropion, trazodone</p> <p>For neuropathic pain:</p> <p>SNRI</p> <p>gabapentin (caution with renal dysfunction)</p> <p>Lyrica (caution with renal dysfunction)</p> <p>lidocaine patch</p>

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
		<p>Amitriptyline or imipramine for pain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> duloxetine (caution with renal dysfunction) gabapentin (caution with renal dysfunction) Lyrica (caution with renal dysfunction) venlafaxine venlafaxine, extended release <p>Clomipramine for OCD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> citalopram escitalopram fluoxetine fluvoxamine sertraline venlafaxine

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Antiemetic medications:</p> <p>promethazine oral solution</p> <p>promethazine injection solution</p> <p>promethazine tablet</p>	<p>Anticholinergic effects such as confusion, dry mouth and constipation</p> <p>Potential to worsen Parkinsonian symptoms</p>	<p>granisetron</p> <p>ondansetron</p>
<p>Antithrombotic medications:</p> <p>dipyridamole (short-acting)</p>	<p>May cause orthostatic hypotension</p>	<p>clopidogrel</p> <p>aspirin-dipyridamole, extended release</p>

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Antipsychotic medications: thioridazine</p>	<p>Increases risk of orthostatic hypotension or bradycardia</p> <p>Caution in patients with epilepsy or chronic seizures; lowers seizure threshold; may be acceptable in individuals with well controlled seizures in whom alternative agents have not been effective</p> <p>Anticholinergic properties</p> <p>Antipsychotics are associated with an increased risk of stroke and greater rate of cognitive decline and mortality in people with dementia</p>	<p>aripiprazole Fanapt haloperidol Latuda paliperidone quetiapine risperidone Saphris Seroquel XR ziprasidone</p>

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Barbiturate medications:</p> <p>phenobarbital oral elixir</p> <p>phenobarbital tablets</p>	<p>High rate of physical dependence</p> <p>Tolerance to sleep benefits</p> <p>Greater risk of overdose at low dosages</p>	<p>For seizures:</p> <p>carbamazepine</p> <p>lamotrigine</p> <p>divalproex</p> <p>levetiracetam (caution with renal dysfunction)</p> <p>oxcarbazepine</p>

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Cardiovascular medications:</p> <p>digox tablets (250mcg/d)</p> <p>digitex tablets (250mcg/d)</p> <p>digoxin tablets (250mcg/d)</p> <p>digoxin oral solution (250mcg/d)</p>	<p>May be associated with increased mortality in people with atrial fibrillation</p> <p>May be associated with increased mortality in older adults with heart failure</p> <p>Higher doses in heart failure are not associated with additional benefit and may increase risk of toxicity</p> <p>Decreased renal clearance may lead to increased risk of toxic effects</p> <p>Avoid doses greater than 125mcg/d in atrial fibrillation and heart failure</p>	<p>Potential alternatives should be discussed with provider depending on indication for use and goals of care</p>

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
Dementia medications: ergoloid	Lack of efficacy	donepezil galantamine memantine Namenda XR rivastigmine
Hormone medications: estrogens with or without progesterone – oral and topical patch products ONLY (estradiol tablet; estradiol transdermal patch weekly; estradiol valerate intramuscular; estradiol-norethindrone acetate tablet; Menest oral tablet; Premarin oral tablet)	Carcinogenic potential (breast and endometrium) Lack of cardioprotective effect and cognitive protection in older women Aggravation of incontinence	For bone density: Bisphosphonates (alendronate; ibandronate; risedronate) raloxifene For vaginal symptoms: Estrace vaginal cream For vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes): SSRI (except paroxetine) SNRI gabapentin (caution with renal dysfunction)

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Insomnia medications: zaleplon zolpidem</p>	<p>Risk of falls, delirium, fractures and motor vehicle accidents</p> <p>May cause ataxia, impaired psychomotor function and syncope</p> <p>Increased risk of ER visits and hospitalizations</p> <p>Minimal improvement in sleep latency and duration</p>	<p>Rozerem trazodone</p>
<p>Muscle relaxant medications: cyclobenzaprine chlorzoxazone</p>	<p>Anticholinergic effects, sedation and increased risk of fractures</p> <p>Dosages tolerated by older adults may not be efficacious</p>	<p>Potential alternatives should be discussed with provider depending on indication for use and goals of care</p>

Commonly Prescribed High-Risk Medication	Clinical Concerns	Alternatives
<p>Parkinson's disease medications: benztropine tablet</p>	<p>Anticholinergic effects</p> <p>Not recommended for prevention of extrapyramidal symptoms with antipsychotics</p>	<p>carbidopa/levodopa entacapone pramipexole ropinirole</p>
<p>Anti-infective medications: nitrofurantoin macrocrystal capsule nitrofurantoin monohyd/m-cryst capsule nitrofurantoin oral suspension</p>	<p>Avoid if CrCl is less than 30 mL/min or for long-term suppression of bacteria</p> <p>Potential for pulmonary toxicity, hepatotoxicity, and peripheral neuropathy</p>	<p>amoxicillin-clavulanate cefaclor cefpodoxime cephalexin ciprofloxacin levofloxacin sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim</p>
<p>Endocrine medications: megestrol oral suspension megestrol tablet</p>	<p>Minimal effect on weight</p> <p>Increases risk of thrombotic events and possibly death in older adults</p>	<p>Potential alternatives should be discussed with provider depending on indication for use and goals of care</p>

References:

1. American Geriatrics Society 2015 updated Beers Criteria for potentially inappropriate medication use in older adults. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2015;63:2227-2246.
2. Hanlon JT, Semla TP, Schmader KE. Alternative Medications for Medications in the Use of High-Risk Medications in the Elderly and Potentially Harmful Drug-Disease Interactions in the Elderly Quality Measures. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2015;63(12):e8-e18.
3. Micromedex Solutions. Truven Health Analytics, Inc. Ann Arbor, MI. Available at: <http://www.micromedexsolutions.com>. Accessed Dec. 30, 2016.



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