

Pocket Guide to High-Risk Medications in the Elderly

Class Description	Medication to avoid ^{1,2}	Formulary Alternatives ³
Alpha Agonists, Central	Guanabenz, Guanfacine, Methyldopa, Reserpine (>0.1mg/day)	Clonidine (not recommended as first line agent for treatment of hypertension)
Analgesics, Non-COX-selective NSAIDs	Indomethacin, Ketorolac	Meloxicam, Tramadol, Naproxen, Sulindac, Etodolac, Diclofenac
Antidepressants, Tricyclic	Amitriptyline, Clomipramine, Doxepin (doses > 6 mg/day), Imipramine, Trimipramine	Depression: SSRIs, SNRIs, Mirtazapine, Bupropion, Nortriptyline Insomnia: Short term use of non-benzodiazepine hypnotics (<90 days/year), Trazodone (low-dose 50mg)], Rozerem, Silenor (Doxepin ≤6mg /day), Melatonin Neuropathic Pain: Gabapentin, Lyrica
Antihistamines, First-Generation	Brompheniramine, Carbinoxamine, Chlorpheniramine, Clemastine, Cyproheptadine, Dexchlorpheniramine, Diphenhydramine (oral), Doxylamine, Hydroxyzine, Promethazine, Tiprolidine	Pruritus/urticaria: Cetirizine, Levocetirizine, Dexamethasone, Hydrocortisone Insomnia: Short term use of non-benzodiazepine hypnotics (<90 days/year), Trazodone (low-dose [50mg]), Rozerem, Silenor (Doxepin ≤6mg /day), Melatonin Nausea/Vomiting: Ondansetron, Prochlorperazine, Granisetron Allergic Rhinitis: Cetirizine, Levocetirizine, Azelastine Nasal, Olopatadine Nasal (Patanase) Anxiety: Buspirone, Fluvoxamine, Alprazolam, Lorazepam
Anti-infective	Nitrofurantoin (when >90 day supply , cumulatively)	Ciprofloxacin, Cephalexin, SMZ/TMP, Methenamine hippurate, Trimethoprim
Anti-Parkinson Agents	Benzotropine (oral), Trihexyphenidyl	Amantadine, Ropinirole, Pramipexole
Antipsychotics, First-Generation	Thioridazine, Mesoridazine	Olanzapine, Quetiapine, Risperidone
Anti-thrombotic Agents	Ticlopidine, Dipyridamole (oral short-acting, does not apply to extended-release combo with aspirin)	Clopidogrel, Effient, Aspirin, Aggrenox
Barbiturates	Amobarbital, Butobarbital, Butalbital, Mephobarbital, Pentobarbital, Phenobarbital, SecoBarbital	Anxiety: Buspirone, Fluvoxamine, Alprazolam, Lorazepam Insomnia: Short term use of non-benzodiazepine hypnotics (<90 days/year), Trazodone [low-dose (50mg)], Rozerem, Silenor (Doxepin ≤6mg/day)
Calcium Channel Blockers	Nifedipine, immediate release	Nifedipine SR, Felodipine SR

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Cardiovascular, Miscellaneous	Disopyramide, Digoxin (doses > 0.125 mg/day)	Heart Failure: Digoxin 0.125mg/day, ACE Inhibitor (Lisinopril, Enalapril, Quinapril, Ramipril, etc.) or ARB (Losartan, Valsartan) and/or a Beta Blocker (Metoprolol Succinate [SR], Carvedilol)
Endocrine	Megestrol	Mirtazapine, Dronabinol
Estrogens	Oral Estrogens, Estrogen/Estradiol Transdermal Patches, Estradiol Gel & Spray	Hot Flashes: SSRIs, Venlafaxine Vaginal Dryness: Estrace Vaginal Cream Bone Density: Calcium, Vitamin D, Alendronate, Raloxifene
Gastrointestinal, Anti-emetic	Trimethobenzamide, Promethazine	Ondansetron, Prochlorperazine, Granisetron
Narcotics	Meperidine, Pentazocine	Hydrocodone, Morphine, Oxycodone, Fentanyl TD patch, Hydromorphone
Non-benzodiazepine Hypnotics (include when cumulative day supply is >90 days)	Eszopiclone (Lunesta), Zolpidem, Zaleplon (Sonata)	Short term use of non-benzodiazepine hypnotics (<90 days/year), Trazodone (low-dose [50mg]), Silenor (Doxepin ≤6 mg/day), Rozerem, Melatonin
Skeletal Muscle Relaxants	Carisoprodol, Chlorzoxazone, Cyclobenzaprine, Metaxalone, Methocarbamol, Orphenadrine	Baclofen, Tizanidine, Dantrolene
Sulfonylureas, Long-Duration	Chlorpropamide, Glyburide	Glipizide, Glimepiride, Metformin, Januvia, Jentadueto, Janumet, Tradjenta
Thyroid	Desiccated Thyroid (Armour Thyroid, Nature-Throid)	Levothyroxine, Liothyronine

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¹Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA)'s High Risk Medication [in the Elderly] List; updated 2015. ²American Geriatric Society Updated Beers Criteria for potentially inappropriate medication use in older adults. JAGS. 2012;60(4):1-16 ³Not a comprehensive list of options; Please refer to current Viva formulary for other possible alternatives.