

High Risk Medications for the Elderly

According to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the drugs included in the chart below should be avoided or used with caution in the senior population. These drugs are considered by medical experts to have a high risk of side effects when used by seniors and, therefore, may pose a safety concern.

Some of these drugs simply are not effective enough to be routinely used or are no longer recommended because newer, safer alternatives are now available. Alternative therapies may include non-drug treatment. As always, make sure to speak to your doctor first before changing your medications.

DRUG CLASS	DRUGS TO AVOID
Analgesics	indomethacin ketorolac meperidine (Demerol®) meperidine/promethazine (Meprozone®) pentazocine (Talwin®) pentazocine/APAP (Talacen®) naloxone/pentazocine (Talwin NX) butalbital (Fioricet®, Esgic®)
Antidiabetic	glyburide (Diabeta®, Glynase®) chlorpropamide (Diabenese®)
Antiemetic	trimethobenzamide (Tigan®)
Antihistamines <i>(*includes combination medications)</i>	cyproheptadine (Periactin®) dexchlorpheniramine (Polaramine®)* diphenhydramine (Benadryl®, Unisom®)* hydroxyzine (Vistaril®, Atarax®) promethazine (Phenergan®)*
Antipsychotics	thioridazine (Mellaril®)
Antithrombotics	dipyridamole (Persantine®) ticlopidine (Ticlid®)
Hormones	oral estrogen (Cenestin®, Menest®, Ogen®, Premarin®, Prempro®, Premphase®) estrogen patch (vivelle®, vivelle-dot®, climara®) desiccated thyroid (Armour® Thyroid) megestrol (Megace®)

DRUG CLASS	DRUGS TO AVOID
Sleep Aids	butabarbital (Butisol®) pentobarbital (Nembutal®) phenobarbital secobarbital (Seconal®) eszopiclone (Lunesta®) zolpidem (Ambien®, Ambien CR®) zaleplon (Sonata®)
Tricyclic Antidepressants	amitriptyline clomipramine (anafranil®) doxepin (>6mg/day) imipramine (Tofranil®) trimipramine (Surmontil®)
Other CNS	chloral hydrate meprobamate
Muscle Relaxants	carisoprodol (Soma®) carisoprodol w/ASA & cod (Soma cmpd®) chlorzoxazone (Parafon Forte®) cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril®, Amrix®) metaxalone (Skelaxin®) methocarbamol (Robaxin®) orphenadrine (Norflex®) orphenadrine w/ASA & caf (Norgesic®)
Urinary Anti-Infectives	nitrofurantoin (Macrochantin®, Macrobid®) short-term use OK
Hypertensive: alpha blockers, central	guanfacine (Intuniv®) methyldopa reserpine (>0.1mg/day)
Other Cardiovascular	digoxin (Lanoxin®) dose greater than 0.125mg/day disopyramide (Norpace®) nifedipine (immediate release)
Parkinson's Agents	benztropine trihexyphenidyl
Other	ergoloid mesylates isoxupine

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