

High-risk Medication Reference



The Pharmacy Quality Alliance has determined the following medications have the highest risk of side effects for those members older than 65 years of age. “High-risk” means a medicine can cause serious health problems or accidents. High-risk medications can be:

- A medicine that raises your risk of drowsiness, confusion, depression, organ damage, serious harm from a fall, or other dangerous side effects
- A medicine for one health problem that worsens another health problem
- Two or more medications that are dangerous when taken together. The more medicines you take, the greater the risk of negative interactions

Please review the list of high-risk medications below. If you are taking one or more of the medications listed, please speak with your doctor to determine if there are safer choices with fewer possible side effects.

| First-generation antihistamines (medications commonly used to treat allergies) | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brompheniramine • Carbinoxamine • Chlorpheniramine • Clemastine • Cyproheptadine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dexbrompheniramine • Dexchlorpheniramine • Dimenhydrinate • Diphenhydramine (oral) • Doxylamine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hydroxyzine • Meclizine • Promethazine • Pyrilamine • Triprolidine |

| Antiparkinson agents (to treat Parkinson’s disease) | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benztropine (oral) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trihexyphenidyl |

| Antispasmodics (medications commonly used to treat stomach/intestinal cramping) | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atropine (excludes ophthalmic) • Belladonna alkaloids • Chlordiazepoxide-clidinium • Dicyclomine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hyoscyamine • Methscopolamine • Propantheline • Scopolamine |

| Antithrombotics (medication used to prevent blood from clotting inappropriately) |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dipyridamole (short-acting product only) |

| Anti-infectives (medication used to treat infections) |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrofurantoin (only when taken for 90 days or more) |

| Alpha blockers (medications that help blood vessels remain open) | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guanfacine • Methyldopa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserpine (only if you take more than 0.1mg a day) |

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| Cardiovascular | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disopyramide Digoxin (only if you take more than 0.125mg a day) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nifedipine (immediate release only) | |
| Antidepressants | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amitriptyline Clomipramine Doxepin (only if you take more than 6mg a day) Imipramine Trimipramine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amoxapine Desipramine Nortriptyline Paroxetine Protriptyline | |
| Barbiturates (medications used most commonly to treat anxiety) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amobarbital Butabarbital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butalbital Pentobarbital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phenobarbital Secobarbital |
| Other medications that act on the central nervous system | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meprobamate | | |
| Nonbenzodiazepine hypnotics (medications used to treat sleep disorders) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eszopiclone (only when taken for 90 days or more) Zaleplon (only when taken for 90 days or more) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zolpidem (only when taken for 90 days or more) | |
| Vasodilators (medications that act on muscles in blood vessel walls to dilate) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ergoloid mesylates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isoxsuprine | |
| Endocrine | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desiccated thyroid Estrogens with or without progesterone (oral and topical patch products only) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Megestrol | |
| Sulfonylureas (medications used to treat diabetes) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chlorpropamide Glyburide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glimepiride | |
| Pain medication | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meperidine | | |
| Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (Also called NSAIDs; are used to treat inflammation, mild to moderate pain, and fever) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indomethacin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ketorolac | |
| Skeletal muscle relaxants (as a single agent or as part of a combination product) | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carisoprodol Chlorzoxazone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyclobenzaprine Metaxalone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methocarbamol Orphenadrine |