



High-risk medication reference sheet

The Pharmacy Quality Alliance has determined the following medications have the highest risk of side effects among those 65 years of age or older. “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)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brompheniramine • Carbinoxamine • Chlorpheniramine • Clemastine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyproheptadine • Dexbrompheniramine • Dexchlorpheniramine • Diphenhydramine (oral) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doxylamine • Hydroxyzine • Promethazine • Triprolidine
Anti-Parkinson agents (to treat Parkinson’s disease)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benztropine (oral) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trihexyphenidyl 	
Anti-thrombotics (medications used to prevent blood from clotting inappropriately)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ticlopidine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dipyridamole 	
Anti-infective (medication used to treat infections)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrofurantoin (only when taken for 90 days or more) 		
Alpha blockers (medications that help blood vessels remain open)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guanabenz • Guanfacine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methyldopa • Reserpine (only if you take more than 0.1mg a day) 	
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) 	

Tertiary Tricyclic Antidepressants (medications used to treat psychiatric conditions)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amitriptyline • Clomipramine • Doxepin (only if you take more than 6mg a day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imipramine • Trimipramine 	
Antipsychotics (medications used to treat psychiatric conditions)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thioridazine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesoridazine 	
Barbiturates (medications used most commonly to treat anxiety)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amobarbital • Butobarbital • Butalbital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mephobarbital • Pentobarbital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenobarbital • Secobarbital
Other medications that act on the central nervous system		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chloral hydrate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meprobamate 	
Nonbenzodiazepine hypnotics (medications used to treat sleep disorders)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eszopiclone • Zaleplon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zolpidem 	
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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glyburide 	
Gastrointestinal (digestive system)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trimethobenzamide 		
Pain Medications		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meperidine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pentazocine 	
Non-steroidal 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

A division of HealthNow New York Inc., an independent licensee of the BlueCross BlueShield Association. BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York is a health plan with a Medicare contract.