

Medication Monitoring for the Elderly¹

Medication:

ACE Inhibitor (ACE-I), ARBs, aliskiren
ACE-I or ARB + potassium sparing diuretic
Alpha blockers
Arthritis drugs (NSAIDs) + prednisone
Beta blockers
Beta blocker eye drops
Calcium channel blockers
Digoxin > 0.125mg/day
Diuretics
Insulin, oral hypoglycemics
Metformin
Muscle relaxants
Narcotic pain relievers
Psychoactive medications

Thiazolidinediones
Warfarin + sulfa drugs

Monitor for:

Potassium, renal function, cough
Potassium
Orthostatic hypotension, dizziness
GI bleeding, edema, dyspnea
Dyspnea, fatigue, bradycardia
Bradycardia
Ankle edema, dizziness, constipation
Digoxin toxicity
Potassium, dehydration
Hypoglycemia
Renal function
Sedation, falls, confusion
Sedation, falls, confusion, constipation
Sedation, falls, confusion, dry mouth, constipation
Hepatic function, fluid retention
Increased pro-time, bleeding, bruising

This is a partial list and does not include all drugs. Prescribing in elderly patients is highly complex, and should be conducted with the greatest care on a case-by-case basis, considering the complete patient medical profile. The above information is intended only as a general guide. Prescribers are encouraged to refer to the most current and reputable medical evidence for more detailed guidance.

Safe Prescribing Practices for the Elderly²

- ◆ Update medication list at each visit
- ◆ Prescribe the fewest number of drugs possible
- ◆ Eliminate drugs without an indication for use
- ◆ Non-drug therapy and lifestyle changes to reduce the need for medication
- ◆ Check for drug-drug and drug-disease interactions before prescribing
- ◆ Evaluate if the side effect of another medication is being treated with new medicine
- ◆ Choose the simplest dosage regimen at the lowest patient cost to improve adherence
- ◆ Start new medications at a low dose and advance slowly
- ◆ Replace potentially inappropriate medications with safer alternatives
- ◆ Use teach-back techniques with medication education
- ◆ Communication across healthcare settings optimizes patient safety and medication use outcomes

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² Novielli KD, Koenig JB, White E, Wertheimer A, Nash DB. Individualized Prescribing for the Elderly. P&T. 2001;26(2):1-26.

The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy.