

Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy and Procedure		
High Alert Medications/Look-Alike Sound-Alike Medications		
Effective: September 2014	Revised: September 2024	Due for Review: September 2026

POLICY

High Alert medications are defined by the Joint Commission as drugs that bear a heightened risk of causing significant hospitalized individual harm when they are used in error. The Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH) developed processes for the safe management of High-Alert, Look Alike/ Sound Alike and Hazardous medications. Not every medication on the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) list may require special management, all hospitalized individuals that manage or utilize medications in any manner should become familiar with the medications identified by ISMP and should be aware of the potential for error due to the look-alike, sound-alike nature.

The VPCH shall maintain a list of High Alert/ Look-alike, Sound-alike medications that are stored, dispensed, or administered in the organization, and implement measures to prevent errors involving the interchange of these medications.

PROCEDURE

High Alert Medications:

- Identify high-risk or high-alert medications used within the hospital. A written list of such medications shall be created, and its location made known to all relevant staff.
- Identification of high-risk or high-alert medications at the institution may be based upon ISMP's List published reports of sentinel events, adverse drug reactions and medications errors and the hospital's unique utilization patterns of drugs, and its own internal data.
- As appropriate to the services provided, the hospital develops processes for procuring, storing, ordering, transcribing, preparing, dispensing, administering, and/or monitoring these medications.
- Identify High Alert medications that may result in serious consequences to the hospitalized individual if used improperly. Label medication storage bins "High Alert" stickers in pharmacy and in the Pyxis Machines on the Nursing Units
- Create laminated list of High Alert medications and post in relevant areas, such as the medication room (see attachment)
- Standardize and limit the number of drug concentrations available.
- All High alert medication will require an additional alert statement in Pyxis prior to withdrawing the medication. It states this is a High Alert medication. The Nurse must acknowledge the statement prior to continuing with the withdrawal of medication process.
- Two Registered Nurses must verify the dose of subcutaneous insulin of all types prior to administration to hospitalized individuals. See policy on High Alert- Insulin

- Appropriate laboratory monitoring at standard intervals shall be obtained and closely monitored for clozapine.

Look Alike- Sound Alike Medications:

- Pharmacy Services, in conjunction with nursing services and the medical staff, shall develop and maintain a list of look-alike, sound-alike medications that are used throughout the organization. Identify look-alike/sound-alike medications (LASA) where mix-up may result in serious consequences to the hospitalized individual. Label medication storage bins and shelving with -LASA in pharmacy and in the Pyxis Machines on the Nursing Units.
- The list shall be approved by the medical staff as a physician awareness issue due to the nature of potential medication interchange.
- The list shall be reviewed annually, and as needed, by the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee for revision and continued approval.
- Tallman lettering will be used in Electronic Health Records/ Automated dispensing cabinets.
- All Look Alike/ Sound like medication will require an additional alert statement in Pyxis prior to withdrawing the medication. It states this is a Look Alike /Sound Alike medication. The Nurse must acknowledge the statement prior to continuing with the withdrawal of medication process.
- Measures shall be undertaken to prevent medication errors related to the procurement, storage, preparation, distribution, and administration of look-alike, sound-alike and high alert medications

Attachments

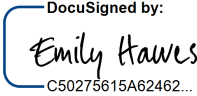
Appendix A: High Alert Drug List (2024)

Appendix B: VPCH Look-Alike, Sound-Alike List

References

Joint Commission M.M.01.01.03 , MM 01.02.01

Institute of Safe Medical Practices’ (ISMP) List of High Alert Medications

Approved by	Signature	Date
Emily Hawes, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Mental Health	 <p>DocuSigned by: Emily Hawes C50275615A62462...</p>	9/25/2024

Appendix A: High Alert List (2024)

The following list contains the formulary drugs that are considered High Alert at VPCH:

Vasopressors or Inotropic Agents:

Epinephrine Hydrochloride (Adrenalin) – Epipen, inj.

Injectable sedative agents

Diphenhydramine, inj.

Lorazepam, inj.

Antipsychotic medication with essential lab monitoring:

Clozapine, tablets

Oral Hypoglycemic agents:

Glipizide, immediate and extended-release tablets

Metformin, immediate and extended-release tablets

Insulins: (requires two RNs to verify dose prior to subcutaneous administration):

Insulin lispro

Insulin glargine

Opioid Narcotic Analgesics:

Buprenorphine

Buprenorphine/naloxone

Appendix B: VPCB Look-Alike- Sound-Alike (Confused Drugs Names) List (2024)

Drug Name	Confused Drug Name
Afrin (oxymetazoline)	Afrin (saline)
Afrin (saline)	Afrin (oxymetazoline)
ALPRAZ olam	LOR azepam
ARIP iprazole	PANTOP razole
bu PROP ion	bus PIR one
bus PIR one	bu PROP ion
car BAM mazepine	OX carbazepine
Cele XA	Zy PREXA
clonaze PAM	clo NIDINE
clonaze PAM	LOR azepam
Depakote	Depakote ER
Depakote ER	Depakote
Effexor XR	Effexor
Flonase	Flovent
FLU oxetine	PAR oxetine
FLU oxetine	Loxitane
Huma LOG	Humu LIN
hydr ALAZINE	hydr OXY zine
HYDRO codone	oxy CODONE
hydr OXY zine	hydr ALAZINE
Keppra	Keflex
Lanoxin	levothyroxine
Lasix	Luvox
levofloxacin	lev ETIRA acetam
LOR azepam	ALPRAZ olam
Loxitane	FLU oxetine
Luvox	Lasix
naloxone	Lanoxin
Neurontin	Motrin
OLANZ apine	QUET iapine
OX carbazepine	car BAM mazepine
PAR oxetine	FLU oxetine
predniso LONE	predni SONE
predni SONE	predniso LONE
Pantoprazole	ARIP iprazole
QUET iapine	OLANZ apine
Restoril	Risper DAL
risperi DONE	r OPINIR ole
r OPINIR ole	risperi DONE
SERO quel	SERO quel XR
SERO quel	SINE quan
SERO quel XR	SERO quel

SINE quan	SERO quel
SINE quan	Singulair
Singulair	SINE quan
TEG retol	TEG retol XR
TEG retol XR	TEG retol
Wellbutrin SR	Wellbutrin XL
Wellbutrin XL	Wellbutrin SR
Zestril	Zy PREXA
Zocor	Cozaar
Zy PREXA	Cele XA
Zy PREXA	Zestril