

Reference Guide: Drugs to avoid in the Elderly



glyburide causes prolonged hypoglycemia in the elderly because it is longer acting and accumulates in renal impairment compared to glimepiride and glipizide. Using any of these drugs should be discouraged with insulin because it does not add much benefit and may increase hypoglycemic risk.

Switch your patients on glyburide using the comparative doses in the chart.

Drug	Comparative Daily Dose				
glyburide	1.25mg	2.5mg	5mg	10mg	20mg
glimepiride	1mg	1 or 2mg	2mg	4mg	8mg
glipizide	2.5mg	5mg	5mg	10mg	20 or 40mg

DiPiro JT, Talbert RL, YeeGC, Matzke GR, Wells BG, Posey LM, eds. Pharmacotherapy: A Pathophysiologic Approach. 8th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill; 2011. Sulfonylurea dose comparison. Pharmacist's Letter/Prescriber's Letter 2009;25(8):250801.

zolpidem, zaleplon and **Lunesta** cause cognitive impairment, delirium, unsteady gait, syncope and falls. Insomnia does not always require medication to treat. Treat the medical causes of insomnia such as sleep apnea, depression, anxiety, restless legs and pain.

Look for medications that can cause sleep problems.

Insomnia-causing Drugs	Alternatives
alfuzosin, doxazosin, prazosin, tamsulosin, terazosin	finasteride
cortisone, methylprednisolone, prednisone, triamcinolone	Take dose early in the day
fluoxetine, sertraline	Take dose early in the day OR try paroxetine, fluvoxamine
cimetidine	famotidine, ranitidine
furosemide, hydrochlorothiazide, spironolactone	Take dose early in the day
theophylline	Advair, Symbicort, Flovent, Qvar, Foradil, Serevent

megestrol increases the risk of thrombotic events and possibly death in older adults.

Alternatives to megestrol (Megace)
mirtazapine for depressed patients

estrogens increase the risk of CVD, cancer and cancer related death when used systemically. This includes combination products with progesterone and transdermal products. Only intravaginal estrogen should be used.

Alternatives to estrogens	
Estrace Cream	Premarin Cream
Vagifem Tablet	OTC lubricants