

What we've been doing...

Your Green Tree pharmacists have been immunizing over 400 residents protecting them against COVID-19 and RSV in 2024 to date.

To schedule a clinic please reach out to Sydney Benson at

sbenson@heritageofcare.com

Rumor vs. Truth...

Rumor... Hydroxyzine does NOT need to be evaluated for a Gradual Dose Reduction (GDR).

Truth... When being used for itching, that is correct due to not being classified as an anxiolytic drug. However, if being used for anxiety, hydroxyzine follows CMS requirements on being evaluated for a GDR. If hydroxyzine is being used as needed for anxiety, the 14-day rule must be implemented.

Suggestions/Comments...

We'd love to hear how we are doing and are always open to your feedback to improve our services. Please call 1-800-913-8174 or visit our website greentreepharm.com and click "contact us" to submit the request / comment.



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News from Our Pharmacy Operations Team

Stay Up to Date with Vaccines:

COVID-19:

CDC recommends that people aged 65 years and older who received 1 dose of any updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine should receive 1 additional dose at least 4 months after the previous updated dose.

COVID-19 transmission remains substantial year-round and cases tend to go up in the summer...unlike flu or RSV and vaccine effectiveness is expected to wane over time.

There's concern about increasing vaccine fatigue. About 60% of those 65 years and up still have not received a first 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. There are still about 20,000 COVID-19 hospitalizations and 2,000 deaths weekly & older adults are most at risk.

MMR:

As of April 16, 2024 the Illinois Department of Public Health has reported 64 cases of measles so far this year. From 2020 – 2023, there were just 5 cases. The majority of measles cases in Illinois this year came from an outbreak at a migrant shelter. Two doses of MMR vaccine has been shown to be 97% effective at preventing measles.

Healthcare personnel should have documented presumptive evidence of immunity according to ACIP. Healthcare personnel without evidence of immunity should get two doses of MMR vaccine, separated by at least 28 days.

Pharmacy Team Spotlight: Makenzie White, CPhT



Makenzie joined our Green Tree Pharmacy team in September of 2016. She is a Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT). Makenzie has not only maintained her daily tasks in

Order Entry, but has been "Happy to Oblige" with added work in the billing department. She is very assiduous and always looking for ways to make the most efficient use of her time. Makenzie seems to be ubiquitous in our Green Tree Pharmacy workflow. She is always willing to help a fellow coworker, and regularly asks if someone needs assistance with anything. She is very approachable, team-oriented, communicates effectively and is a vital part of the team.

Operations Tips and Tricks

Be sure to communicate with pharmacy when medications from the convenience boxes have been used to ensure timely replenishment and eliminate the need for utilizing a back-up pharmacy due to stock-outs.

Health Awareness Months:

April: Parkinson's Disease Awareness

May: Mental Health Awareness
National Asthma & Allergy Awareness
National Nurses Month
National Osteoporosis Awareness
National Stroke Awareness
Older Americans Month

June: Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness

Clinical Acorns and Guidelines

Regulatory Update/ Review

National Drug Take Back:

The 26th National Prescription Drug Take Back Day was Saturday April 27th 2024. This day aims to provide a safe and responsible way to dispose of prescription drugs while also educating the public about the danger/abuse of medications.

Locate a collection site near you at deادiversion.usdoj.gov

Levemir discontinuation:

Levemir, a long-acting insulin, is to be discontinued by Novo Nordisk in 2024. The company said it is discontinuing due to global manufacturing constraints, formulary losses, and the availability of alternative options. Levemir Flex-pen was discontinued on April 1st and Levemir vials will no longer be available after Dec 31st 2024. You can continue using any product you have at the facilities until expiration. Other long-acting insulin includes basaglar, lantus, semglee, glargine-yfgn.

Be prepared. Text. Save. Share.



Text POISON to 797979 & save Poison Control vCard to your phone.

Clinical Focus: Urinary Tract Infections

Risk factors for UTIs in adults includes female sex, menopause, urinary tract abnormalities (neurogenic bladder), blockages (kidney stones, enlarged prostate), catheter use & incontinence.

Asymptomatic bacteriuria is common in the elderly. Those with WBCs in the urine, genitourinary symptoms (dysuria, frequency, urgency) and a positive culture should be treated. Symptoms may be atypical such as mental status changes, lethargy & incontinence. Pyuria alone is not an indication for treatment.

UTI prophylaxis can be considered with recurrent UTIs (3 in a year or 2 in 6 months). Although many patients often antibiotic prophylaxis for years, only 6 to 12 months duration is evidence-based. Medications include:

Cephalexin 125 to 250 mg once daily
Nitrofurantoin 50 to 100 once daily
Trimethoprim 100 mg once daily
TMP/SMX 40/200 mg once daily or 3x weekly
Fosfomycin 3 g every 10 days
Ciprofloxacin 125 mg once daily

Non- antibiotic prophylaxis includes increase fluid intake by 1.5 L daily if appropriate, vaginal estrogen cream in postmenopausal patients and cranberry supplementation.

Phenazopyridine (Pyridium, AZO) is commonly used for cystitis symptoms. Recommended dose is 190 to 200 mg TID with food x 2 days. Use with caution in older adults due to potential for accumulation in patients with renal insufficiency. Manufacturer recommends avoiding in CrCl < 50 mL/min due to cases of acute kidney injury, hemolytic anemia & methemoglobinemia have been reported in those with reduced kidney function.



Gepirone ER (Exxua):

An estimated 21 million Americans are affected by major depressive disorder each year. Exxua will be the first selective serotonin 1A receptor agonist approved for depression.

The efficacy of Exxua for treatment of major depression disorder in adults was evaluated in two 8 week randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies in adults between the age of 18 and 69 years of age. Results showed that patients in the treatment group had a statistically significantly greater improvement in the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale total score at week 8 compared to the placebo group.

In geriatric patients, patients with renal impairment (CrCl < 50 mL/min) or moderate hepatic impairment, the recommended starting dose is 18.2 mg once daily and can be increased to 36.3 mg after 7 days.

Adverse effects include nausea, dizziness, headache, insomnia. Exxua prolongs the QT interval more than other antidepressants and ECG monitoring is recommended before starting and periodically during treatment.

Benefits include no sexual dysfunction adverse effects or weight gain.

This medication is also costly (at least \$500/month).

Discontinuing meds in Alzheimer's:

Consider stopping memantine or cholinesterase inhibitors for dementia if:

- Side effects occur
- End of life care
- Desired effects (stabilization) are not seen in 3 to 6 months
- There is rapid or persistent deterioration in cognition, function, and behavior
- Difficulty in swallowing/ refusing

In US Medicare data analysis, discontinuation of cholinesterase inhibitors was associated with a *decreased* risk of falls/fractures in nursing home patients with severe dementia.