



**What we've been doing...**

*Green Tree Pharmacy is in the process of implementing Therapeutic Interchanges for cost savings to the patient and facility!*

**Rumor vs. Truth...**

**Rumor...** *Insulin pens are good until expiration on pen*

**Truth...** *Insulin pens should be dated once removed from the refrigerator. Once at room temperature, the expiration on the pen no longer applies.*

*Please review to Green Tree's insulin expiration document for specific product beyond use dates (may vary from 14 to 56 days depending on the specific product).*

*If pharmacy sends a medication with a sticker requesting date open, please add!*

*When our consultant pharmacists make onsite med room visits, they will help pull any expired product. Not having a date puts the residents at risk for administering insulin that lost its potency/effectiveness.*

**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

**Therapeutic Interchange:**

A therapeutic interchange is the practice of replacing, with the prescribing practitioner's approval, a prescription medication with an alternative medication to improve patient outcomes and decrease medication costs for both the patient and medical organization.

This interchange allows all healthcare staff to operate more efficiently with reduced phone calls, emails and faxes to authorize a change if mandated by the resident's insurance.

Green Tree Pharmacy recently added over 15 therapeutic interchange options. The process is as follows:

- Medication will be interchanged to the appropriate product based on resident's insurance/facility preferred alternative
- Pharmacy will indicate on the original order that an interchange has taken place and will fax the order back to the facility
- Facility will have to change to the interchanged product on the administration record
- A detailed notification will be printed and attached to the medication notifying the facility that an interchange has occurred, as well as a therapeutic interchange sheet will be included in the delivery box
- Please pay attention that the directions of the interchanged product may be different than the originally ordered product

**Pharmacy Team Spotlight:**



Kevin joined our Green Tree team in April of 2022. He is a courier driver and has driven most of the 11 routes shared by our drivers. He shows his "Happy to

Oblige" ethics by being a team player and always willing to help with any task big or small. When Kevin is not fulfilling delivery orders, he also helps on the floor as a Pharmacy Technician filling medication orders. He does STAT deliveries during the day for any urgent facility needs. He is very flexible by always picking up extra shifts and is greatly appreciated by all of us at Green Tree Pharmacy.

**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:**

- July: Healthy Vision Month
- August: National Immunization Awareness  
World Lung Cancer Day (August 1<sup>st</sup>)
- September: Healthy Aging Month  
Atrial Fibrillation Month

# Clinical Acorns and Guidelines

## Regulatory Update/ Review

### Unnecessary Psychotropic:

F758 of the CMS State Operations Manual involves the use of unnecessary psychotropic medications.

PRN orders for psychotropic drugs are limited to 14 days. If the prescriber believes that it's appropriate for the PRN order to be extended beyond 14 days, they should document their rationale in the resident's medical record and indicate the duration for the PRN order.

PRN orders for anti-psychotic orders are limited to 14 days and cannot be renewed unless the prescriber evaluates the resident for the appropriateness of that medication.

### Green Tree Consulting Pharmacists:

Your experienced and knowledgeable consultant pharmacists provide MRRs to evaluate for unnecessary psychotropic drugs.

Our 6 pharmacy consultants at Green Tree Pharmacy have 53 years of consulting experience when combined together.

Your consultant pharmacists help with knowledge gaps on CMS regulations that may lead to survey action. They identify and document GDR opportunities and attempts.

Continued use of antipsychotic medication without an adequate indication, GDR attempts, and evidence of non-pharmacological approaches can result in harm. They commonly can cause movement disorders, falls, hip fractures, cerebrovascular adverse effects and increased risk of death.

## Clinical Focus: Smoking Cessation



Cigarette smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer. In the U.S., cigarette smoking is linked to about 80% to 90% of lung cancer deaths. It is never too late to quit using tobacco.

Free services include calling 800-QUIT-NOW or texting "QUIT" to 47848.

Medication options include:

### Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT):

combining long-acting NRT (patch) with short-acting NRT formulations (gum, lozenge, sprays) is a first-line option. These are available over the counter.

Patch: provides consistent nicotine levels throughout the day. Rotate patch sites to minimize skin irritation. Insomnia and vivid dreams (more common with 24-hour patch) may lessen after 3 to 4 days. If not, consider switching to the 16-hour patch. If continue to have trouble sleeping or vivid dreams, consider removing patch at bedtime.

**Varenicline (Chantix)**: monotherapy or combination with NRT is considered a first-line option. Begin taking 1 to 4 weeks BEFORE quit date. This medication blocks nicotine binding to receptors and partially stimulates nicotinic receptors to lessen pleasure from nicotine and reduce cravings.

**Bupropion SR**: Start taking 1 to 2 weeks BEFORE quit date. Consider for patients with concomitant depression. Advantage: suppresses weight gain associated with smoking cessation.



## Medications affected by food:

Some medications work better when taken on an **empty stomach** including thyroid medication, bisphosphonates, proton pump inhibitors and sucralfate.

Some medications should be taken **with food** to avoid stomach upset or other side effects. Most common medications include: corticosteroids, NSAIDs, some antibiotics, fast-acting insulin, metformin and sulfonyleureas. Latuda needs to be given with food at least 350 calories for proper absorption.

Medications can also interact with foods:

**MAOIs and tyramine containing foods** (aged cheese, meats, soy/yeast products) can cause a hypertensive crisis. The MAOIs block the monoamine oxidase enzyme that breaks down tyramine.

### Vitamin K and Warfarin

Foods containing Vitamin K (dark green vegetables) decrease the effectiveness of Warfarin, increasing the risk of clotting. Patients should not exclude these foods from their diet, but should maintain a consistent intake.

### Grapefruit and Statins

Grapefruit inhibits CYP3A4, an enzyme that breaks down statins, therefore increases the concentration of some statins. This can lead to increased risk of rhabdomyolysis.

### Calcium and tetracyclines

Calcium products bind to tetracyclines (ie doxycycline) and inhibits the absorption of this antibiotic. Wait two hours after calcium to take a tetracycline.

### Alcohol and numerous drugs

Drinking alcohol increases risk for CNS depression. Medications include opioids, benzodiazepines and gabapentin. Avoid alcohol while on metronidazole and for 3 days after completing due to a disulfiram-like reaction (flushing, headaches, nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps).

### Fiber and Digoxin

Foods containing fiber can slow down the absorption of digoxin, decreasing its effectiveness.

### Caffeine and Ciprofloxacin

Ciprofloxacin inhibits CYP1A2 and increases levels of caffeine.