



# Commonly Prescribed Potentially Inappropriate Medications in the Florida Elderly April 2009

Medication	Concerns	Alternatives
<b>Propoxyphene</b> (e.g., Darvon®, Darvocet®)	Combination no better than acetaminophen alone <sup>1</sup> and less effective than ibuprofen <sup>2</sup> with narcotic adverse effects. <sup>3</sup> An FDA Advisory Panel recently recommended a withdrawal of propoxyphene from the US market, <sup>4</sup> which is currently pending an FDA decision.	<b>Mild pain:</b> acetaminophen,* short acting NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen) <sup>*5</sup> <b>Moderate/severe pain:</b> hydrocodone/acetaminophen, oxycodone/acetaminophen, oxycodone, fentanyl patch <sup>5</sup> <b>Topicals:</b> lidocaine, capsaicin <sup>*5</sup>  <b>Note:</b> Sudden discontinuation of chronic therapy can result in withdrawal symptoms. Gradual tapering is recommended. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Cyclobenzaprine</b> (e.g., Flexeril®)	Questionable efficacy at doses tolerated by the elderly <sup>3,7</sup> and efficacy past 2-3 weeks not proven. <sup>8</sup> Can cause sedation, weakness, and anticholinergic adverse effects (e.g., cognitive impairment, dry mouth, urine retention) and may increase the risk of falls in the elderly. <sup>3,5,9</sup>	<b>Nondrug:</b> Physiotherapy, correct seating and footwear <sup>5</sup> <b>Drug:</b> For spasticity, baclofen, tizanidine, nerve blocks <sup>5</sup>
<b>Hydroxyzine</b> (e.g., Atarax®, Vistaril®)	Can cause sedation and anticholinergic adverse effects (e.g., cognitive impairment, dry mouth, urine retention) and may increase the risk of falls in the elderly. <sup>3,5,9</sup>	<b>Allergic conditions:</b> cetirizine,* fexofenadine, loratadine,* desloratadine, levocetirizine <sup>5</sup> <b>Anxiety:</b> SSRI, SNRI, buspirone <sup>10-12</sup>
<b>Promethazine</b> (e.g., Phenergan®)	Can cause sedation and anticholinergic adverse effects (e.g., cognitive impairment, dry mouth, urine retention) and may increase the risk of falls in the elderly. <sup>3,5,9</sup>	<b>Allergic conditions:</b> cetirizine,* fexofenadine, loratadine,* desloratadine, levocetirizine <sup>5</sup> <b>Nausea:</b> ondansetron, <sup>13</sup> granisetron, dolasetron
<b>Oral Estrogens</b> (e.g., Premarin®, Prempro®)	Carcinogenic potential (breast, endometrial cancer), not cardioprotective in the elderly. <sup>3</sup> May increase the incidence of dementia in the elderly. <sup>14</sup>	<b>Hot flashes:</b> non-drug therapy, SSRIs, gabapentin, venlafaxine <sup>5</sup> <b>Bone density:</b> calcium,* vitamin D,* bisphosphonates (e.g., alendronate), raloxifene <sup>5</sup>
<b>Nitrofurantoin</b> (e.g., Macrobid®, Macrochantin®)	Contraindicated in renal impairment (CrCl < 60 ml/min or clinically significant elevation of serum creatinine). <sup>15</sup> Increased risk of toxicity in elderly patients. <sup>16</sup>	<b>UTI:</b> Depends on infection <sup>5</sup> : trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, trimethoprim, fluoroquinolones (e.g., ofloxacin, ciprofloxacin) <sup>17-19</sup>

\*Available as an over-the-counter (OTC) option

## References

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