



Medication Audit Criteria and Guidelines

Sedating Antihistamines

- Diphenhydramine
- Hydroxyzine

PEFC Approved: August 2020

Indications

- Aggression and agitation
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Parkinsonism and other EPS

Black Box Warning

None

Contraindications

Absolute

- Anticholinergic intoxication
- Delirium
- Early pregnancy (hydroxyzine)
- Hypersensitivity to medication prescribed
- Known hypersensitivity to cetirizine or levocetirizine (hydroxyzine)
- Prolonged QT interval (hydroxyzine)

Relative

- Disease states where increased anticholinergic activity may complicate disease course (narrow angle glaucoma, benign prostatic hypertrophy, etc.)
- Elderly, debilitated patients
- Hepatic impairment (hydroxyzine)
- Lower respiratory tract symptoms (asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis)
- Pregnancy and nursing mothers
- Renal impairment (hydroxyzine)
- Risk factors for QT prolongation (hydroxyzine) – such as concomitant QT prolonging medications, electrolyte imbalance, pre-existing heart disease, family history of congenital long QT syndrome

Precautions

- Elderly
- Respiratory impairment
- Urinary retention
- Use with other anticholinergic medications
- Use with other CNS depressants or sedatives

Adverse Reactions

Side Effects Which Require Medical Attention

- Delirium
- Over-sedation, dizziness, or lightheadedness
- Pain with, or change in frequency of urination
- Severe anticholinergic side effects (mydriasis, tachycardia, urinary retention, hypotension, constipation, arrhythmia, etc.)
- Worsening confusion or agitation

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

- See absolute and relative contraindications
- Review product-specific labeling. Consider risks/benefits in reviewing medication specific labeling.

Drug Interactions of Major Significance

See: [Indiana Univ Drug Interaction Table](#)

Special Populations

Age-Specific Considerations

- Pediatrics/Adolescents
 - ▶ See "Psychotropic Medication Utilization Parameters for Children and Youth in Texas Public Behavioral Health (6th Version)" for specific details.
- Geriatric
 - ▶ Included in Beers Criteria. Use caution or avoid use as potentially inappropriate in older adults
 - ▶ Hydroxyzine – dose cautiously by starting on the lower end of the dosing range
- May cause paradoxical excitability in children, elderly, and persons with developmental disabilities

Renal

- Diphenhydramine – no specific labeling recommendations
- Hydroxyzine
 - ▶ GFR > 50 ml/min – no adjustment recommended

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- ▶ GFR \leq 50 ml/min – 50% of normal dose

Hepatic

- Diphenhydramine – no specific labeling recommendations
- Hydroxyzine - in adults with primary biliary cirrhosis, change dosing interval to every 24 hours

Patient Monitoring Parameters

Pregnancy test – baseline and as clinically indicated

Dosing

- See HHSC Psychiatric Drug Formulary for dosage guidelines.
- Exceptions to maximum dosage must be justified as per medication rule.