


**GUAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AUTHORITY  
PHARMACY DEPARTMENT**

<b>APPROVED BY:</b>  FLORENCIA LIZAMA, MD Interim Hospital Administrator/CEO	<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b> Pharmacy	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> 06/04/2007	<b>POLICY NO.</b> 704	<b>PAGE</b> 1 of 4
<b>TITLE: LOOK-ALIKE/SOUND-ALIKE MEDICATIONS</b>				
<b>LAST REVIEWED/REVISED: 04/28/2015</b>				
<b>ENDORSED: P&amp;T 04/28/2015</b>				

**PURPOSE:**

Medications that look alike and/or sound alike have been identified as contributors to medication errors. This policy describes the process of identifying such medications within GMHA and the methods for reducing the potential for error.

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of this healthcare organization to maintain a list of look-alike, sound-alike drugs used in the organization, and to implement measures to prevent errors involving the interchange of these drugs.

Ten (10) pairs of look-alike, sound-alike medications shall be chosen from the list provided by the Joint Commission to be compliant with National Patient Safety Goal #3, Requirement C. Additional look-alike, sound-alike medications may be chosen, in addition to the 10 pairs from the Joint Commission's list.

**PROCEDURE:**

- A. The Pharmacy Department, in conjunction with nursing services and the medical staff, will develop and maintain a list of look-alike, sound-alike drugs that are used throughout the organization. The list will be approved by the medical staff as a physician awareness issue due to the nature of potential drug interchange.
- B. This list will be distributed to all licensed independent practitioners every year, and as necessary when revisions are made. Measures outlined in accompanying policies, such as the Pharmacy Department Inventory Control policy and procedure, the organizational Prescribing/Ordering General Practices, High Alert Medication Management and the Decreasing Drug Errors policies and procedures, will be undertaken to prevent medication errors related to the procurement, storage, preparation, distribution and administration of look-alike, sound-alike and high alert medications.
- C. The following is the Joint Commission's list of look-alike, sound-alike medications. At least five (5) of these medication combinations must be selected from Table I or from Table II, as appropriate to the type of organization. An additional five (5) medication combinations must be selected from any of the three (3) Tables I, II, or III. Brand names are shown in italics:

<b>Table I (Critical Access Hospital, Hospital, Office-based Surgery)</b>			
Plantinol (cisplatin)	Paraplatin (carboplatin)		
Concentrated liquid morphine products vs. conventional liquid morphine concentrations:	Concentrated:	Roxanol, MSIR	
	Conventional:	morphine oral liquid	
ephedrine	Adrenalin (epinephrine)		
Sublimaze (fentanyl)	Sufenta (sufentanil)		
Dilaudid (hydromorphone injection)	Astramorph	Suramorph	Infumorph (morphine injection)
Humulin (human insulin products)	Humalog (insulin lispro)		
Novolin (human insulin products)	Novolog (human insulin aspart)		
Novolin 70/30 (70 % isophane insulin {NPH} and 30% insulin injection {regular})	Novolog Mix 70/30 (70% insulin aspart protamine suspension and 30% insulin aspart)		
Lipid-based daunorubicin and doxorubicin products vs. conventional forms of daunorubicin and doxorubicin:	Lipid-based:	Doxil  (doxorubicin liposomal)	Daunoxome (daunorubicin citrate liposomal)
	Conventional:	Cerubidine (daunorubicin, conventional)	Adriamycin, Rubex (doxorubicin, conventional)
Lipid-based amphotericin products vs. conventional forms of amphotericin:	Lipid-based:	Ambisome (amphotericin B liposomal)	Abelcet (amphotericin B lipid complex) Amphotec (amphotericin B cholesteryl sulfate complex for injection)
	Conventional:	Amphocin	Fungizone Intravenous (amphotericin B desoxycholate)
Taxol (paclitaxel)	Taxotere (docetaxel)		
Velban (vinblastine)	Oncovin (vincristine)		

<b>Table II (Ambulatory Care, Assisted Living, Behavioral Health, Disease Specific Care, Home Care, Long Term Care)</b>			
Avandia (rosiglitazone)	Coumadin (warfarin)		

Catapres (clonidine)	Klonopin (clonazepam)		
	Conventional:	morphine oral liquid	
Dilaudid (hydromorphone injection)	Astramoprh	Suramorph	Infumorph (morphine injection)
Humulin (human insulin products)	Humalog (insulin lispro)		
Novolin (human insulin products)	Novolog (human insulin aspart)		
Novolin 70/30 (70 % isophane insulin {NPH} and 30% insulin injection {regular})	Novolog Mix 70/30 (70% insulin aspart protamine suspension and 30% insulin aspart)		
Zyprexa (olanzapine)	Zyrtec (cetirizine)		

acetoexamide	acetazolamide		
Bretyllium	Brevibloc		
chlorpropamide	chlorpromazine		
Clonazepam	Lorazepam	diazepam	
Diflucan	Diprivan		
folic acid	leucovorin calcium ("folinic acid")		
heparin	Hespan		
idarubicin	doxorubicin	daunorubicin	
Leukeran	leucovorin calcium		
Prilosec	Prozac		
Primacor	Primaxin		
Retrovir	Ritonavir		
tizanidine	tiagabine		
Zantac	Xanax		
Zantac	Zyrtec		

- D. The Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) has identified medications that have the potential for erroneous interchange due to their look-alike, sound-alike nature. While not every medication on the list may require special management, all individuals that manage or utilize medications in any manner should become familiar with the drugs identified by ISMP and should be aware of the potential for error due to the look-alike, sound-alike nature.
- E. The medication names listed on the ISMP and JCAHO websites may not sound alike as they are read or spoken aloud; however, when handwritten or communicated verbally, these names have a high potential for causing a sound-alike erroneous interchange.
- F. Prevention of errors

1. The Pharmacy Department will maintain a list of Look-Alike / Sound Alike Medications that are either commonly used within GMHA or are particularly dangerous if confused. The list is maintained on the GMHA Intranet for all hospital staff to review.
2. The list will be reviewed annually for possible amendment and compared with Look-Alike / Sound-Alike Drugs actually reported as errors by the Institute for Safe Medication Practices, the United States Pharmacopoeia, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
3. TALL-man letters will be used on storage bin labels for these selected drugs to emphasize potential problems and avoid confusion between the agents.
4. TALL-man letters are used on computer drug files so that the drug names appear distinctive on the computer screen and on labels.
5. For toxic intravenous drugs and chemotherapy medications, maximum dose warnings are built into the computer drug files so that orders and doses are reviewed carefully during processing.
6. Look/Alike, Sound Alike Medication pairs will not be stored adjacent to each other.