

High-Alert Medications

Policies CS-06-06-01 and CS-06-06-19



Definition: medications with higher risk of causing significant client harm and injury when used in error.

- Pharmacy maintains a list of High Alert Medications which is reviewed annually.
- To reduce risks of errors, Pharmacy will supply high-alert medications in a ready-to-use format whenever possible.
- "High Alert Medication" label stickers are applied to packaging and storage containers.
- High Alert Medications often, Look alike, Sound alike, and/or Read alike. The use of TALLman lettering assists with distinguishing the subtle differences.
- The **Therapeutic Index (TI)** is the concentration of medication required to produce a therapeutic effect without causing toxicity. Medications such as Warfarin, Digoxin, and Levothyroxine, have a narrow TI in which a small dose difference may lead to adverse effects.



High-Alert Medication Groups:

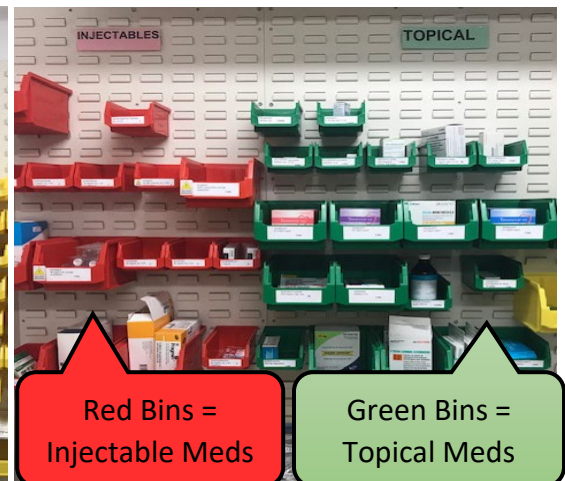
- ! Anticoagulants
- ! Benzodiazepines
- ! Chemotherapy Drugs
- ! Concentrated Electrolytes
- ! Hypoglycemic Medications
- ! Opiate Narcotics
- ! Local Anesthetics
- ! Transdermal Patches
- ! Dialysis Solutions

- All High-Alert Medications are stored in individual containers/bins with only one type of medication per storage container. Bins are labelled with generic name, strength, dosage form, and product size.
- All site prepared doses of insulin, heparin, or potent narcotics, require **Independent Double-Check** to verify calculations and the dose prior to administration where a second nurse/regulated health professional is available. **Co-signature** is used to indicate Independent Double-Check is completed. **Note:** double-check is not required for Low Molecular Weight Heparin (LMWH) supplied as a pre-filled syringe in the ordered dose.
- **Errors involving High Alert Meds may have serious consequences and are automatically deemed Severity Level 3 or 4.**

To reduce medication errors, Pharmacy will **physically separate, isolate, and segregate** these medications. **TALLman** lettering is used to differentiate medications with similar spelling.



Yellow Bins =
Oral Meds



Red Bins =
Injectable Meds

Green Bins =
Topical Meds