Alternatives for Medications Listed in the AGS Beers Criteria\textsuperscript{®} for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults

Recently, the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) released the 2023 AGS Beers Criteria\textsuperscript{®} for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults. For more than 20 years, the Beers Criteria have been a valuable resource for healthcare providers about the safety of prescribing drugs for older people. Your healthcare provider may choose to substitute alternatives in place of potentially inappropriate medications included in the AGS Beers Criteria\textsuperscript{®}. Some of these alternatives are listed below and focuses on medications that are tracked in various quality measures, which are used by U.S. health plans to measure performance on important aspects of care.

Key Points

- \textbf{Never stop taking a medication without first talking to your healthcare provider}, even if a medication you’re taking is listed on the AGS Beers Criteria.

- \textbf{Know about the medications you are taking}. Ask your clinician or pharmacist about the medications you are taking and their potential side effects. If you’re experiencing any symptoms, ask if they could be related to a medication you are taking or if it may be a sign of another problem. Use only trusted, reliable sources (such as MedlinePlus) to look up information.

- \textbf{Review your medications regularly}. You should regularly review all of the medications you are taking with your clinicians and pharmacists. You should report any problems with your medications, including any side effects, questions you may have about them, or any problems with taking them as prescribed (such as cost). These reviews should occur at least once a year as well as any time a new medication is prescribed.

\textbf{Remember:}

Potentially inappropriate medications are just that—potentially inappropriate. The AGS Beers Criteria\textsuperscript{®} and the list of alternatives are resources, not a replacement, for the expertise and knowledge of your healthcare provider. The AGS Health in Aging Foundation has developed this resource to help you talk to your healthcare provider about these possible alternatives to Beers Criteria medications you’re taking.

For more information on potentially inappropriate medication use, please read the Ten Medications Older Adults Should Avoid or Use with Caution tip sheet.
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<th>Medication Class/Examples</th>
<th>Possible Alternatives to Discuss with your Healthcare Provider</th>
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| **First Generation Antihistamines**   | - saline nasal rinse  
- steroid nasal sprays such as fluticasone (Flonase)  
- Allergy products such as:  - cetirizine (Zyrtec)  - fexofenadine (Allegra)  - loratadine (Claritin) |
| (used for allergies)                   | **Tricyclic Antidepressants for depression**  - selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as:  - citalopram (Celexa)  - sertraline (Zoloft)  - buproprion (Historically known as “Wellbutrin”) |
| - chlorpheniramine (AllerChlor)        | **Barbituates**  - phenobarbital  - other drugs ending in “barbital”  
**Sleeping Aids**  - zolpidem (Ambien)  - zaleplon (Sonata)  - eszopiclone (Lunesta)  
**Pain Medication (NSAIDs)**  People with chronic kidney disease or chronic renal failure should avoid all non-aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs).  - acetaminophen (Tylenol)  - topical capsaicin products  - lidocaine patches  - serotonin–norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) such as:  - duloxetine (Cymbalta)  - venlafaxine (Effexor)  
**Benzodiazepines** (often used to treat anxiety and sleep disorders as well as other conditions)  - alprazolam (Xanax)  - lorazepam (Ativan)  - diazepam (Valium)  
For moderate or severe anxiety:  - selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as:  - citalopram (Celexa)  - sertraline (Zoloft)  
For sleep or anxiety:  - Ask your healthcare provider about anxiety management techniques and other strategies to improve sleep.  
For hot flashes and night sweats:  - gabapentin (Neurontin)  - selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)  
For vaginal dryness:  - topical estrogen creams  
**Hormone Therapy**  - estrogen pills and patches  
**Muscle Relaxants**  - cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril / Amrix / Fexmid)  - methocarbamol (Robaxin)  - acetaminophen  - NSAID pain medications such as ibuprofen or naproxen (Short-term use only. Be cautious about long-term use; avoid if you have heart failure or kidney disease.)  
- Stretching, heating and/or cooling, and physical therapy or therapeutic massage  
**NOTE:** This is only a partial list of medications. Medications listed in parentheses are examples of brand names of the generic medications listed.