

Top 10 Sound-Alike & Look-Alike Drugs

Potential Problematic Drug Names in Red

BRAND (and generic) NAMES

Potential Errors and Consequences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>▪ INSULIN PRODUCTS NOVOLIN (human insulin products) NOVOLOG (human insulin apart) NOVOLIN 70/30 (70% isophane insulin [NPH] and 30% insulin regular) <i>Similar names, strengths and concentration ratios have contributed to medication errors. Mix-ups may result in hypoglycemia or poor diabetes control.</i></p> <p>▪ CATAPRES (clonidine) KLONOPIN (clonazepam) <i>The generic name of clonidine can easily be confused as the trade or generic name of clonazepam. Mix-ups may result in hypotension, loss of seizure control, or other serious adverse events.</i></p> <p>▪ AMBISOME (amphotericin B liposomal) ABELCET (amphotericin B lipid complex) AMPHOCIN, FUNGIZONE (amphotericin B desoxycholate, conventional amphotericin B) <i>Doses of lipid-based products are usually higher than conventional products. Doses also vary from product to product. Confusion between products may result in respiratory arrest, renal failure and sometimes fatal adverse events.</i></p> <p>▪ GLUCOPHAGE (metformin) FLAGYL (metronidazole) <i>Drugs with similar names and dosage strengths may be confused with poorly handwritten orders. Mix-ups may result in hypoglycemia or untreated infection.</i></p> <p>▪ VELBAN (vinblastine) ONCOVIN (vincristine) <i>Fatal errors have occurred, often due to name similarity, when patients were given vincristine at a vinblastine dose.</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>▪ ULTRAM (tramadol) DESYREL (trazodone) KETOROLAC (toradol) <i>Drugs with similar generic names. Mix-ups may result in a decline in pain control, change in psychiatric symptoms, or other serious adverse events.</i></p> <p>▪ VISTARIL, ATARAX (hydroxyzine) APRESOLINE (hydralazine) HYDRODIURIL (hydrochlorothiazide) <i>Drugs with similar names and dosage strengths. Mix-ups may result in sedation, hypotension, or other serious adverse drug events.</i></p> <p>▪ COUMADIN (warfarin) AVANDIA (rosiglitazone) CARDURA (doxazosin) <i>Poorly handwritten orders for Avandia (used for type II diabetes) or Cardura (used for blood pressure or urinary symptoms) have been misread for Coumadin (an anticoagulant), or vice versa.</i></p> <p>▪ DILAUDID (hydromorphone) injection ASTRAMORPH, DURAMORPH, INFUMORPH (morphine) injection <i>Hydromorphone is 4-8 times more potent than morphine. Fatal errors have occurred due to the false belief that hydromorphone is the generic equivalent of morphine.</i></p> <p>▪ CELEBREX (celecoxib) CEREBYX (fosphenytoin) CELEXA (citalopram) <i>Drugs with similar brand names may be confused with poorly handwritten orders. Mix-ups may result in decline in mental status, lack of pain or seizure control, or other serious adverse events.</i></p>
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Strategies to Prevent Look-Alike/Sound-Alike Errors	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid abbreviations of drug names. ▪ Physically separate agents in storage areas and automated dispensing cabinets (Pyxis®). ▪ Use novel dosage delivery devices to distinguish products with similar names. ▪ Print generic and brand names on unit-dose packaging, when possible. ▪ Use TALL MAN lettering to emphasize the spelling of drug names in Pyxis® and medication storage areas. ▪ Include prompts for nurses to specify indication for use when medication is removed from Pyxis. ▪ Include dosing limits for medications with similar indications. ▪ Place “Look Alike, Sound Alike” auxiliary alerts on medication storage bins. ▪ Remove drugs with potentially problematic names from formulary, whenever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All drugs ▪ Insulin products ▪ NovoLog FlexPen® ▪ traMADOL, trAZODONE ▪ Hydroxyzine, hydralazine ▪ Tramadol, toradol