

May 2019 ~ Resource #350531

Look-Alike/Sound-Alike Medications

Confusion between similar drug names is an important cause of medication errors.^{1,2,5} Poor handwriting, similar product labeling, and unfamiliarity with drug names or new products are some of the factors that contribute to this problem.⁵ Some strategies pharmacies can consider to reduce drug name mix-ups include implementation of technology (e.g., bar-code scanning, computer alerts), use of auxiliary labels, use of tall man lettering, separating products on shelves, and reading back orders.^{2,3} Prescribers can help reduce look-alike/sound-alike errors by writing prescriptions clearly, not using abbreviations, and by including the indication for the medication on the prescription.^{1,2,4} Familiarizing yourself with potential problem drugs can also aid in the recognition and prevention of an error.^{2,5} Below is a listing of some of the more common or problematic look-alike/sound-alike drug names (*brand names are italicized*).

For a listing of confusing drug name pairs involved in med errors go to <http://www.ismp.org/tools/confuseddrugnames.pdf>. (Please note that the Joint Commission website no longer maintains a list of look-alike/sound-alike drug names. They now direct viewers to the ISMP list.) ISMP also has a list of look-alike drug names with recommended tall man lettering at <https://www.ismp.org/recommendations/tall-man-letters-list>.

* These two drug names are easily confused when poorly written.

Examples of Look-Alike and/or Sound-Alike Drug Names

Accutane and *Accolate*, *Accupril*
Acetazolamide and Acetaminophen
Aciphex and *Accupril*
Actonel and *Actos*
Adderall and *Inderal*
Advicor and *Advair*
Allegra and *Viagra*
Anzemet and *Avandamet*
Aricept and *Aciphex*
Aripiprazole and Rabeprazole
Asacol and *Os-Cal*
Atomoxetine and Atorvastatin
Avandia and *Coumadin**
Avandia and *Prandin*
Avinza and *Evista*

Azathioprine and Azithromycin
Azilect and *Aricept*
Bicillin C-R and *Bicillin L-A*
Bisoprolol and Bisacodyl
Brintellix and *Brilinta*
Bupropion and Buspirone
Carafate and *Cafergot*
Carboplatin and Cisplatin
Cataflam and *Catapres*
Celebrex and *Celexa*, *Cerebyx*
Clonidine and *Klonopin*
Codeine and *Cardene*
Coumadin and *Cardura*
Depakote and *Depakote ER*
DiaBeta and *Zebeta*

Dexamethasone and Dexmedetomidine
Diazepam and Diltiazem, *Ditropan*
Diflucan and *Diprivan*
Dobutamine and Dopamine
Duloxetine and Paroxetine
Epinephrine and Ephedrine
Farxiga and *Fetzima*
Femara and *Femhrt*
Fluocinolone and Fluocinonide
Folic Acid and Folinic Acid
Foradil and *Toradol*
Glipizide and Glyburide
Haldol and *Stadol*
Humalog and *Humulin*, *Humalog Mix*,
Novolog

More . . .

Hydralazine and Hydroxyzine
Hydrocodone and Oxycodone
Invega and *Intuniv*
Keppra and *Kaletra*, *Keflex*
Labetalol and Lamotrigine
Lamisil and *Lamictal*
Lamivudine and Lamotrigine
Lanoxin and Levothyroxine
Lasix and *Losec* (Canada)
Lexiva and *Levitra*
Lithium and *Ultram**
Lorazepam and Alprazolam
Lotensin and Lovastatin
Lovenox and *Levoxyl*
Malarone and Mefloquine
Melatonin and *Mellaril*
Metformin and Metronidazole
Methadone and Methylphenidate,
Metolazone
Methocarbamol and Methotrexate
Morphine SO₄ (MSO₄) and Magnesium
SO₄ (MgSO₄)
Mucinex and *Mucomyst*

Myfortic and *Myrbetriq*
Narcan and *Norcuron*
Neutra-Phos-K and *K-Phos Neutral*
Nicardipine and Nifedipine and Nimodipine
Nolvadex and *Norvasc*
Novolog and *Novolin*
Opium Tincture (deodorized) and Paregoric
(camphorated opium tincture)
Oxybutynin and Oxycodone
OxyContin and *MS Contin*
OxyContin and Oxycodone
Plavix and *Paxil*
Plavix and *Pradaxa*
Prednisolone and Prednisone
Prilosec and *Prozac*
Prograf and *Proscar*, *Prozac*
Ranitidine and Rimantadine
Rifampin and Rifaximin
Risperdal and Ropinirole
Razadyne and *Rozerem*
Retrovir and Ritonavir
Rituxan and *Rituxan Hycela*
Singulair and *Sinequan*

Tacrolimus and Tamsulosin
Taxol and *Taxotere*
Tenex and *Xanax*
Tiagabine and Tizanidine
Toprol XL and *Tegretol-XR*,
Tegretol, *Topamax*
TNKase and *Activase*
Tramadol and Trazodone
Valtrex and *Valcyte*
Valsartan and Verapamil
Vinblastine and Vincristine
Volumen and *Voluven*
Wellbutrin SR and *Wellbutrin XL*
Yasmin and *Yaz*
Zantac and *Xanax*, *Zyrtec*
Zestril and *Zyprexa*
Zetia and *Zebeta*, *Zestril*
Zocor and *Zyrtec*
Zyrtec and *Zyprexa*
Zyvox and *Zovirax*

More. . .

Users of this resource are cautioned to use their own professional judgment and consult any other necessary or appropriate sources prior to making clinical judgments based on the content of this document. Our editors have researched the information with input from experts, government agencies, and national organizations. Information and internet links in this article were current as of the date of publication.

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