



Department:	Pharmaceutical Care Department		
Document:	Multidisciplinary Policy And Procedure (MPP)		
Title:	Handling Look-Alike/Sound-Alike Medications		
Applies To:	Pharmacists, Physicians & Nurses		
Preparation Date:	December 22, 2024	Index No:	MM-MPP-014
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1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 Develop a multidisciplinary policy and procedure on handling Look-alike and Sound-alike medications.
- 1.2 To prevent potentially harmful medication errors that may result from confusing medication names and similar product packaging.

2. DEFINITONS:

- 2.1 Look-Alike and Sound-Alike Medications: Look-Alike/Sound -Alike (LASA) medications involve medications that are visually similar in physical appearance or packaging and names of medications that have spelling similarities and/or similar phonetics.

3. POLICY:

- 3.1 Hospital plan for prevention of medication errors from use LASA:
 - 3.1.1 The Pharmacy Department will:
 - 3.1.1.1 Provide the standardized list of LASA medication in the of maternity and children hospital, Hafer AL Batin.
 - 3.1.1.2 Develop guidelines to monitor new drugs added to the hospital formulary as they are released.
 - 3.1.1.3 Annually update this list by pharmacy and therapeutics committee.
 - 3.1.1.4 Using axillary(blue) label.
 - 3.1.1.5 Take appropriate action to prevent errors involving the interchange of these drugs by providing education on LASA medications to healthcare professionals.

4. PROCEDURE:

- 4.1 Contributory risk factors associated with LASA medications includes:
 - 4.1.1 Illegible handwriting.
 - 4.1.2 Lack of knowledge regarding drug names (Generic and Brand Name).
 - 4.1.3 Availability of new drugs.
 - 4.1.4 Similar packaging or labeling.
 - 4.1.5 Similar strengths, dosage forms, frequency of administration.
 - 4.1.6 Similar clinical use (indication).
- 4.2 Strategies to avoid errors with Look-Alike and Sound-Alike Medications Which May Occur During Any of The Following Processes:
 - 4.2.1 Storage:
 - 4.2.1.1 Minimize the availability of multiple medicines strengths
 - 4.2.1.2 Use Tall Man lettering to emphasize differences in medications with sound alike names. Tall Man lettering is the practice of writing non similar letters medicines name in upper case letters to help distinguish medications from one another to avoid medication errors.

- 4.2.1.3 Auxiliary warning labels for look –alike medicines. Warning labels should be uniform throughout the respective facility to facilitate identification (Blue colour labels).
- 4.2.1.4 Place LASA medications in locations separate from each other or in non-alphabetical order
- 4.2.2 Prescribing:
 - 4.2.2.1 Write legibly, using both the brand and generic names for prescribing LASA medications
 - 4.2.2.2 Prescription should clearly specify name of medication, dosage form, dose and complete direction for use.
 - 4.2.2.3 Write the diagnosis or medication's indication for use. This information helps to differentiate possible choices in illegible orders.
 - 4.2.2.4 Communicate clearly. Take your time in pronouncing the drug name whenever an oral order has to be made. Ask that the recipient of the verbal communication repeat the medication name and dose.
 - 4.2.2.5 Follow the police for verbal and telephone order.
- 4.2.3 Dispensing/Supply:
 - 4.2.3.1 Identify medicines based on its name and strength and not by its appearance or location.
 - 4.2.3.2 Check the purpose of the medication and the dose for the medicines dispensed.
 - 4.2.3.3 READ medication labels carefully at all dispensing stages and perform triangle check. Triangle check is to check actual medicines against the medicines' labels and against the prescription.
 - 4.2.3.4 Independent double checking should be conducted during the dispensing and supply process
 - 4.2.3.5 Highlight changes in medication appearances to patients upon dispensing.
- 4.2.4 Administration:
 - 4.2.4.1 Read carefully the label each time a medication is accessed, and/or prior to administration (independent double check)
 - 4.2.4.2 Check the purpose of the medication and the dose prior to administration.
- 4.2.5 Monitoring:
 - 4.2.5.1 Monitor new drugs added to the hospital formulary as they are released and provide guidelines to These new drugs.
 - 4.2.5.2 Monitor patients who may have received wrong medications as result of LASA medication error
- 4.2.6 Information
 - 4.2.6.1 Update healthcare professionals of changes on the list of LASA and confusing drug names.
 - 4.2.6.2 Provide education on LASA medications to healthcare professionals at orientation and as part of continuing education.
- 4.2.7 Patient Education:
 - 4.2.7.1 Inform patients on changes in medication appearances.
 - 4.2.7.2 Educate patients and their caregivers to alert healthcare providers whenever a medication appears to vary from what is usually taken or administered.
 - 4.2.7.3 Encourage patients and their caregivers to learn the names of their medications.
- 4.2.8 Evaluation
 - 4.2.8.1 Evaluate medication errors related to LASA medications.

5. MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT:

- 5.1 Look-Alike , Sound-Alike medication list
- 5.2 Auxiliary Label ,sound alike (blue Label)
- 5.3 Auxiliary Label ,look alike sound alike (dark blue Label)

6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 6.1 Nurse
- 6.2 Pharmacist
- 6.3 Physician

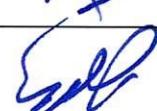
7. APPENDICES:

- 7.1 Look-Alike , Sound-Alike medication list

8. REFERENCES:

- 8.1 Institute for Safe Medication Practices, USA
- 8.2 FDA and ISMP list of Look-Alike Drug Names with Recommended Tall Man Letters 2016(www.ismp.org).
- 8.3 Ministry of Health Rules and Regulations.

9. APPROVALS:

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Sound-alike Medication list

◦ DOBUTamine	◦ DOPamine	
◦ CeFAZolin	◦ cefTAZidime	◦ cefTRIAXon
◦ hydrALAZINE	◦ hydroCHLORothiazide	
◦ levETIRAcetam	◦ levoFLOXacin	◦ levoTHYROXINE
◦ metFORMIN	◦ metRONIDAZOLE	
◦ NovoMIX	◦ NovoRAPID	
◦ SalinAL (simethicone)	◦ SalinNOS (normal saline nasal drop)	
◦ VoltARIN (diclofenacna)	◦ VentOLIN (salbutamol)	
◦ Klavox (Amoxicillin – Clavulanic acid)	◦ Keflex (cephalexin)	
◦ CaptOPRIL	◦ KaptIN	
◦ FluTICASONE	◦ FluCONAZOLE	
◦ DiclofenAC	◦ BAclofen	
◦ SODIUM phosphate	◦ POTASSIUM phosphate	
◦ LABETAlol	◦ METOPROlol	◦ ATENolol
◦ atroVENT	◦ atroPINE	
◦ FLUconazole	◦ MIconazole	
◦ CLINDamycin	◦ claRITHromycin	
◦ lineZOLid	◦ lisinoPRIL	
◦ RACepinephrine	◦ Epinephrine	
◦ simVASTatin	◦ NYStatin	
◦ nitroFURAntoin	◦ nitroGLYcerin	

The list was updated based on ISMP and available Medications at MCH.

Safe Practices to be followed by HCPs to avoid errors with LASA Medicines:

1. Changing physical appearance of LA medications.
2. Segregating LASA Medications.
3. Limiting verbal and telephone orders.
4. Using blue axillary label.
5. Using Tall Man lettering.
6. Applying independent double check

Updated on: 3/2025

For more information: call ext. 1158 -1161 – 1162

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Look-alike Medication list

High Alert Medications (injections)			
calcium chloride prefilled syringe		Adrenaline 1:10,000 prefilled syringe	
Enoxaparin 80mg	Enoxaparin 60mg	Enoxaparin 40mg	Enoxaparin 20mg
	Fentanyl citrate 500 mcg	Fentanyl citrate 500 mcg	
Insulin (Insulinated)	Insulin (Mixtard)	Insulin (Actrapid)	
Insulin pen (NovoMIX)	Insulin pen (Levemir)	Insulin pen (NovoRAPID)	
Insulin pen (Humalog)	Insulin pen (Lantus)		
Dextrose 50%	Lidocain 1%	Sodium chloride 14.6%	Sodium bicarbonate
Syntocinon	Methylergometrine		
Pethidine HCL 50mg/1ml	Pethidine HCL 100mg/2ml		
Fentanyl 50mcg/ml	Phenobarbital 60mg/ml		Ephedrine 60mg
Dobutamine	Potassium Phosphate	Phenytoin	Dopamine
Sodium chloride	Potassium chloride	Sterile water for injection	Calcium gluconate
Calcium gluconate	Calcium chloride 10%		

General Injections and Antimicrobials

Amikaicin 500mg	Amikaicin 100mg	Neostigmine	
Ampicillin 1gm	Ampicillin 500mg		
Ceftazidime 1g	Cefotaxime 1g		
Diclofenac sodium	Dexamethasone		
Fluconazole	Levofloxacin	Ciprofloxacin	
Gentamycin 20mg	Gentamycin 80mg	Ondansetron 8mg	Caffine Citrate
Augmentin	Acyclovir	Cefuroxime	Piperacillin
Metronidazole	Mannitol	Amino Acid	

Tablets

Desmopressin 60 mcg	Desmopressin 120 mcg	Cyclophosphamide 50 mg	
Hydralazine 25 mg	Isosorbide 5 mg		
Lamotrigine 50 mg	Lamotrigine 100 mg	Deferasirax 90 mg	Deferasirax 180 mg
Levothyroxine 25 mcg	Levothyroxine 25 mcg	Levothyroxine 25 mcg	
Meloxicam 7.5 mg	Meloxicam 15 mg		
Metoprolol	Carbamazepine		
Montelukast 5mg	Montelukast 10mg		
Topamax 25 mg	Topamax 100 mg	Phenytoin 100 mg	
Valproate 200mg	Valproate 200mg		
Vitamin D3 50,000 International Unit	Vitamin D3 5,000 International Unit	Vitamin D3 1,000 International Unit	

Syrups

Loratadine	Dextrokuf	Dextrokuf	
Ezolvin	Stopkof 13.5 mg	Stopkof 13.5 mg	Prometin
Ibuprofen	Hyoscine	Hyoscine	

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Amoxicillin	Cefxime	Cephalexin	Metronidazole
Bactrim	Cephadar	Cephadar	
Epicogel (aluminium hydroxide, magnesium hydroxide, dimethicone)		Kapect (Hydrated aluminum &Kaolin)	
Inhalers			
Flixotide 125 mcg	Flixotide 50 mcg		
Seretide 250 mcg	Seretide 125 mcg		
Ventolin nebulizer solution	Ventolin inhaler		
Vaccines			
Hepatitis B adult 1 ml	Hepatitis B Junior 0.5 ml		
General Dosage Forms			
Betamethasone scalp application	Cefotaxime 1g	Ceftazidime 1g	
	One alpha tablet	One alpha drop	
Ipratropium bromoide	Atropine sulphate		

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