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OHCPS NEWSLETTER

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Medication Error

Happy New Year! We hope the holidays treated you all well! The start of a new year is a great time to reflect and look forward to process improvements for the future.

Medication errors are the single most **preventable** cause of patient injury. Med errors are typically a series of system failures that allowed an error to occur. We are ALL responsible for med error prevention.

Definition of a Medication Error

Observed preparation or administration of medication which is not in accordance with:

- Physician's Order
- Manufacturer's package insert
- Acceptable professional standards

Factors that Increase the Potential for a Med Error

- Illegible handwriting
- Inaccurate computer entry
- Inappropriate use of a decimal point
- Unapproved abbreviations
- Sound alike, look alike drugs
- Inaccurate drug history
- Use of multiple tabs to supply dose
- Failure to check med record
- Failure to check resident identity
- Not reading back when documenting a telephone order
- Choosing the top selection in an EMR during data entry

For more information:
Institute for Safe Medication Practices
FDA.gov – Medication Error Reports

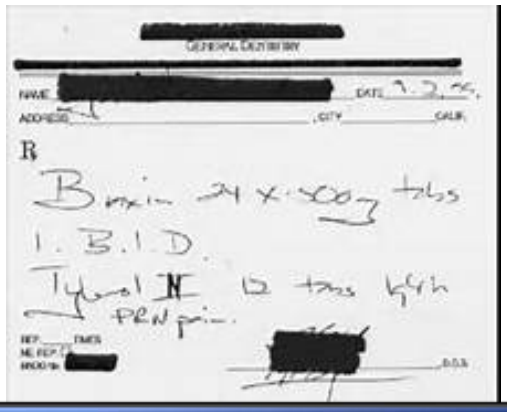
Best Practices for Med Error Prevention

- Do not assign blame; Work together to improve system processes
- Use a ball point pen - write legibly
- Reduce environmental distractions
- Include all components: dose, route, frequency, indication
- Use decimal points appropriately: always use a leading zero, never use a trailing zero
  - Use 0.5mg instead of .5mg
  - Use 1mg instead of 1.0mg
- Whenever unsure, ask for clarification.
- Create a standard abbreviation list.
  - Use daily instead of QD.
  - Write out 4 times daily instead of QID
  - Write out unit instead of IU

Facility Wide Process Improvement

- Create a tracking system to determine if there are trends in med errors to be addressed
- All staff should demonstrate competency in passing medications. Management should recheck competency on a regular basis and retrain as appropriate.

Can you decipher this order?



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