

Medications Manufactured as “Packs” Can Lead to Med Errors

BACKGROUND

- Medications are often sold in pre-dosed “packs” when they are frequently prescribed with standard dosing regimens
- These dosing regimens may be complicated by dose tapers or variable dosing by day
- Providing these drugs as “dose packs” increases patient compliance and decreases med errors

EXCEPTION

- These meds may also be ordered as the individual drug with different directions
- They may come from the pharmacy in normal blister cards with “pack” directions added to label

POTENTIAL ERRORS

- Because these medications are colloquially referred to by their branded “pack” name (i.e. z-pak incorrectly used to refer to azithromycin outside the intent to denote the pre-packed dosage form) it is important for staff to distinguish the actual drug product for which an order is written

Be Aware of the following Common “Pack” Meds to avoid Potential Errors!

Z-PAK (AZITHROMYCIN)

- Frequently used antibiotic indicated for a wide range of bacterial infectious diseases, ranging from pneumonia to STIs
- If ambiguous, clarify if prescriber wants the standard Pak dosing
 - Azithromycin 500mg on Day 1, then 250mg on Days 2-5
- Sometimes a Prescriber will write “ZPak 250mg daily x 10 days”.
 - This order should be clarified as Azithromycin 250mg daily x 10 days
 - Remove the “Pak” from the order

MEDROL DOSEPAK (METHYLPREDNISOLONE)

- Frequently used steroid used for dermatitis (i.e., poison ivy), asthma, and other inflammatory conditions
- 4mg of methylprednisolone/tablet and the dosing schedule is complicated
 - Consider adding regimen to the eMAR as a template so your order can be triple checked
 - If ordered as “Medrol DosePak” and the regimen is just 4mg daily, then the “PAK” should be removed from the order.
 - Choose plain methylprednisolone from your eMar system to avoid DosePak confusion/errors
- FYI: If starting Medrol DosePak in the afternoon/evening, ask prescriber for specific taper directions
- Medrol DosePak regimen is as follows (BF=breakfast | L=Lunch | D=Dinner | HS=Bedtime):
 - **Day 1:** 8 mg PO before BF, 4 mg after L and after D, and 8 mg at HS
 - **Day 2:** 4 mg PO before BF, after L, and after D, and 8 mg at HS
 - **Day 3:** 4 mg PO before BF, after L and after D, and at HS
 - **Day 4:** 4 mg PO before BF, after L, and at HS
 - **Day 5:** 4 mg PO before BF and at HS
 - **Day 6:** 4 mg PO before BF

OTHER EXAMPLES

- **PREVPAC** (Lansoprazole, Amoxicillin and Clarithromycin): Proton Pump Inhibitor +2 Antibiotics indicated for H. Pylori infections
- **Namenda** and **Namenda XL Titration Pack** (Memantine):memory loss agent; taper low → high dose
- **Prednisone Therapy Packs:** Available in multiple strengths (5mg and 10mg), with unique standard taper directions (high → low dose) corresponding to quantity (21 tab packs and 48 tab packs)