

“Ten Things Patients Should Know” Series

DRUGS ASSOCIATED WITH SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS

1. **HYDROMORPHONE**- An opioid drug, similar to morphine, used to treat moderate to severe pain. Can be habit-forming and should not be taken with alcohol. Possible side effects can include drowsiness, nausea, constipation and sweating. Also known as Dilaudid.
2. **WARFARIN**- A blood-thinning medication that is effective in preventing the formation or migration of blood clots. Overdoses can lead to severe bleeding or death. Also known as Coumadin.
3. **MORPHINE SULFATE**- An opiate medication that treats severe pain caused by injury, surgery or chronic illness. This drug targets specific receptors in the brain that control pain and has a high risk of dependency. Similar side effects to Hydromorphone.
4. **INSULIN, REGULAR, HUMAN** - A natural, human hormone made by the pancreas that controls blood sugar (glucose) levels. Symptoms of a possible overdose include seizures, weakness, vomiting or fever.
5. **VANCOMYCIN**- An antibiotic used to treat colitis (inflammation of the intestine caused by bacteria). Often used as a last resort once other antibiotics have failed. Several types of bacteria are now resistant to treatment with vancomycin. Possible side effects may include hives, sore throat, fainting or difficulty breathing.
6. **ENOXAPARIN (LOVENOX)** - A blood-thinning medication used to help reduce the risk of developing DVT, or deep vein thrombosis, which may cause pulmonary embolism (blood clots in the lungs - also called PE). There is danger of spinal/epidural hematomas (blood collection outside of the vessels) that can lead to paralysis.
7. **INSULIN, GLARGINE** -Insulin glargine is a synthetic (laboratory-made) form of insulin, which lowers levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood. Insulin glargine is a long-acting form of insulin. Allergic reactions are possible, and some signs of a possible reaction include wheezing, sweating and skin rash.
8. **POTASSIUM CHLORIDE**- Used as a treatment of decreased levels of potassium in the bloodstream. An overdose can cause cardiac arrest.
9. **FENTANYL**- A narcotic pain reliever that is stronger than morphine and used to treat severe pain. Fentanyl is often given to cancer patients once they have become tolerant to other opioid pain medications. Potentially life-threatening hypoventilation (labored, shallow breathing or extreme sleepiness) can occur.
10. **MIDAZOLAM**- A benzodiazepine drug used to cause drowsiness and relieve anxiety before surgical procedures. May also be used to treat acute seizures and severe insomnia. Signs of a potential overdose include slowed breathing, drowsiness or loss of consciousness. Also known as Versed.