

ABOUT MEDICATION MIX-UPS:

Safety steps are followed each time a patient gets a medication in the hospital. Even so, it's important for you to help, too. There is no such thing as "too safe" for your loved one!



RISK FACTORS:

Patients tend to get several medications in the hospital. Many look alike and some names sound alike. Nurses can be distracted, especially when others talk or interrupt them while giving a medication.

TRUST YOUR GUT:

You know your loved one best. Every medication (or combination of meds) could affect your loved one in a way that's not expected.

Always get a nurse if you have worries about anything that "just doesn't seem right."

HOW TO HELP

PREVENT MEDICATION MIX-UPS:

- ❑ **Make sure your loved one's allergies and any bad experiences with medicines** in the past are included on the medical record — and highlighted in a bold way.
- ❑ **Research the pros and cons of every drug prescribed** for your loved one. Make notes about the potential side effects and interactions at [MedlinePlus](#). If you have any concerns, bring them up immediately with the attending doctor or nurse.
- ❑ **Before a nurse ever gives a medicine, ask:**
 - What is the medicine you're planning to give?
 - What is it for?
 - What is the dose?
 - Who prescribed it?
 - Say: "Let's confirm that it's for (your loved one's name)."
 - For medicines in an IV bag, ask: "What time do you think this bag will run out?" If the bag empties and no one responds to the alarm beep in a few minutes, it's okay to get a nurse.
- ❑ **Don't talk to or distract nurses** when they are giving medicines. However, speak up immediately if you sense a mistake is being made. For example, wrong patient, wrong medicine, wrong time, wrong dose, or wrong way.
- ❑ **Record every time** your loved one gets a medicine.
- ❑ **If your loved one is 65 or older**, check the [Beers List](#), too. For children, check the [Kids' List](#). Both have info about medications considered potentially unsafe or "iffy" for these age groups.



GET A NURSE IF . . .

Your loved one shows signs of (or complains about) the following:

- Diarrhea.
- Stomach cramps.
- Coughing.
- Wheezing.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Swelling face.
- Swelling/itchy eyes.
- Rash or hives.
- Confusion, anxiety, restlessness.
- Light-headedness, dizziness, fainting.
- Swelling in neck.
- Bluish lips.
- Cool, clammy skin.
- Chest pain.
- Unusual sweating.