



Martella's Pharmacy

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Martella's Pharmacy

1079 Franklin Street
Johnstown, PA 15905

Phone: 814-535-1833 · Fax: 814-539-2234

Publisher: Boswell Pharmacy Services
Editor: Lynn Rhine, Pharm.D.
Author: Melissa Leap, Pharm.D.

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Part of a family owned business of three pharmacies and an automated closed-door institutional pharmacy located in Western, PA. Martella's Pharmacy has been providing pharmacy services for over 40 years.

- Boswell Pharmacy Services
- Boswell Prescription Center
- Penn Laurel Pharmacy
- Martella's Pharmacy



Drug News and New Drugs

Sular® is reformulated

Sular® (nisoldipine), a calcium channel blocker used to treat hypertension, has been reformulated. As of May, the old doses will no longer be available. The new extended release tablets are available in 8.5mg, 17mg, 25.5mg, and 34mg. Sular® should be taken at the same time every day on an empty stomach. Also, these tablets should be swallowed whole and not be crushed, chewed, or split.

Singulair® in the News

There has been some talk that Singulair® (montelukast) might increase suicide risk. The FDA is reviewing reports of mood changes, suicidal behavior, and actual suicide in patients taking this asthma medication. Patients should not stop taking Singulair® until first discussing it with their physician. However, if any of

these possible side effects occur, they should be reported immediately.

New Formulation of Auralgan®

The old Auralgan® product, which contained antipyrine and benzocaine, is now being reformulated. The new ear drop now contains acetic acid and "U-polycosanol 410" with antipyrine and benzocaine. The two new ingredients are being added for additional benefits. For instance, the acetic acid is used for its antibacterial and antifungal effects where as the "U-polycosanol 410" is used for its astringent effect. The new formulation of Auralgan® is very expensive compared to the old product.

Antibiotic back on the market

Suprax® (cefixime), a third generation cephalosporin, has now returned to the market.

This antibiotic can be used for urinary tract infections and respiratory infections, however it is the only oral first line agent approved for uncomplicated gonorrhea. A single 400mg dose of Suprax® is recommended to treat patients with gonorrhea.

Vitamin D Deficiency

More patients are being prescribed Vitamin D due to an increased awareness of its deficiency. Many people are deficient in Vitamin D due to a decrease in sun exposure either because they are wearing more sunscreen or because they spend more time indoors. Elderly people may also be deficient due to less activation of vitamin D by their kidneys as well as insufficient absorption through their skin. Deficient vitamin D levels are considered below 20 ng/mL.

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Drug News and New Drugs

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To prevent deficiency in patients under 50 years of age, 400 to 800 IU per day of vitamin D is recommended whereas 800 to 1000 IU per day is recommended in patients older than 50. If patients are being treated for vitamin D deficiency, a dose of 50,000 IU per week is recommended for 6 to 8 weeks at which time their levels should be rechecked.

New Medications

Pristiq® (desvenlafaxine) is a newly approved antidepressant. It is dosed once daily and treatment usually begins at 50 mg/day. Some side effects associated with Pristiq® are insomnia, dry mouth, nausea, sexual dysfunction, and an increase in blood pressure.

Pristiq® is available in 50mg and 100mg strength tablets.

New Generic Medications

Requip® (ropinirole) is now available as a generic tablet in the following strengths: 0.25mg, 0.5mg, 1mg, 2mg, 3mg, 4mg, and 5mg.

Paxil CR® (paroxetine SR) is now a generic product. This tablet is available in the following strengths: 12.5mg, 25mg, and 37.5mg.

Medication Error Prevention:

Abbreviations

Abbreviations can be the cause of medication errors. When writing medication orders, the drug name should always be spelled out in order to decrease the chance of medication

errors. The following abbreviations should be avoided:

- “PTU” for propylthiouracil
- “T3” for Tylenol w/ Codeine #3

Sound-alike/Look-alike Drugs

Always be on the alert for drugs that either sound or look-alike. This can be a common cause for medication errors. Similarity between drug names, either brand or generic, can cause confusion and lead to errors.

Examples:

- Nexium® / Nexavar®
- Propylthiouracil / Purinethol

Ask The Pharmacists

QUESTION: How can I prescribe a patient Auralgan®, if there are two formulations of this product on the market? I want to prescribe the older, less expensive formulation.

ANSWER: To avoid any confusion, a prescribing practitioner should write out “antipyrine/benzocaine” drops when they are requesting the old formulation of Auralgan®.

QUESTION: What is the recommended dose of vitamin D used to prevent deficiency?

ANSWER: The recommended dose of vitamin D used to prevent deficiency in patients over the age of 50 is 800 to 1000 IU per day. The recommended dose in patients less than 50 years of age is 400 to 800 IU per day.

