PURPOSE:

To establish guidelines for the safe ordering and use of high-alert medications within Community Hospital.

DEFINITIONS:

High-alert medications are drugs (ie; controlled substances, medications with a narrow therapeutic range, psycho-therapeutic medications, and look alike/sound alike medications) that bear a heightened risk of causing significant patient harm, higher risk of abuse, or other adverse outcomes when they are used in error.

POLICY:

A. Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee annually reviews formulary drugs, and based on unique utilization patterns of medication and its own internal data about medication errors, identifies those items considered high alert medications at Community Hospital.

B. High alert medications are identified within the system by several methods:
   1. Labeled with auxiliary labels,
   2. Entries are changed within Meditech and PYXIS to reflect tall man lettering (ie; DOPamine - DOBUTamine)
   3. Segregate the medications to avoid confusion and error secondary to look alike/sound alike names
      • whenever possible PYXIS cubies and mini-drawers are used to allow access to only one drug at a time.

C. Hospital staff are informed and educated as to the identified high alert medications and what process are necessary for continued patient safety

2010-2011 High Alert Medications identified by P&T

A. High Alert Medications
   1. Adrenergic agonists (ie; epinephrine)
   2. Neuromuscular blocking agents (ie; succinylcholine)
      • A fluorescent auxiliary label indicating the drug as a paralytic is attached over the cap covering the vial.
   3. Hypoglycemics, oral
   4. Insulins
      • Insulin pens for individual patients are the delivery system of choice
   5. Moderate sedation agents (ie; midazolam)
   6. Heparin
      • Heparin sub-cutaneous 5,000/0.5ml carpuject (single dose) supplied
      • Heparin IV doses to be double checked by two RNs
   7. Warfarin
   8. Concentrated electrolytes
      • available only to the inpatient pharmacist for compounding

B. Look Alike / Sound Alike Medication with tall man lettering
   1. CeleBREX - CeLEXa - CEREbyx
   2. CloniDINE - KlonoPIN
   3. DOPamine - DOBUTamine
   4. EPInephrine - EPHEDrine
   5. HydrOXYzine - HYDRALAZINE
PROCEDURE

1. As with all medication administration health-care professionals will diligently verify medication labeling, appropriateness for patient condition, appropriateness of dose based on patient age and/or laboratory values, route of administration, and frequency.
2. In addition to tall man lettering, segregation, and axillary labeling processes, staff are responsible to identify and inform the Pharmacy Director when further patient safety precautions are needed, in relationship to high alert medications.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Pharmacy, Nursing, and Medical Staff.

Referenced Documents

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<tr>
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<td>Insulin pens</td>
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Signed by

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