

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### Resident Safety: Protect Residents From Drug-Photo Reactions

#### Certain meds + sun a dangerous combination make.

All residents need adequate sun protection when outdoors. But those taking certain medications can suffer serious sunburns in short order.

"Sunburn, if it occurs, can tax a frail elder's cardiovascular system," cautions **Thomas Snader, PharmD, CPG**, principal, **TCS Pharmacy Consultants** in North Wales, PA.

So review a resident's medications -- and consult with the pharmacist -- to red flag situations where a picnic or outdoor outing can create a major safety hazard. For example, "antipsychotics as a class of medications are known to cause photosensitivity, as are certain antibiotics, such as the quinolones," cautions Snader.

The recommendation is for sun-sensitive individuals to avoid the sun, says **Maryellen Maguire-Eisen, RN, MSN**, a dermatology nurse and founder of the **Sun Protection Foundation**. If the person were "very careful" he or she could go outside with proper sun protection, she adds. But she has known patients taking tetracycline, which causes photosensitivity, who ended up badly sunburned because they forgot to reapply sunscreen.

Beware: Patients in "custodial care who have gotten badly sunburned and presented to the emergency department have resulted in neglect charges against caretakers," Maguire-Eisen tells **Eli**.

Keep in mind that people can get burned on a cloudy day, she adds. "Some reports say that 80 percent of UV rays may penetrate clouds," although it depends on the time of year. "UV intensity peaks" at summer solstice (June 21)," so people are at "greatest risk April through August."