

MDS Alert

MEDICATION SAFETY: Crosscheck Antihypertensive Meds With These Conditions

Don't let failure to check the MAR end up marring your survey record.

Anytime a resident develops a new or worsening symptom, consider medications as a potential culprit until proven otherwise.

The following side effects may be seen with the various classifications of medication used to treat hypertension, says **Hosam K. Kamel, MD, MPH, CMD**, in Hot Springs, Ark.

Leg edema: Calcium channel blockers, especially Norvasc;

Cough and impaired renal failure, occasional hyperkalemia: ACE (angiotensin-converting enzyme) inhibitors or ARBs (angiotensin receptor blockers);

Bradycardia: beta blockers;

Depression: lipophilic agents, such as Lopressor or Inderal;

Impaired renal function, urinary incontinence: diuretics.

Orthostatic hypotension: "Most medications that are used to treat hypertension will have an orthostatic [hypotensive] effect," says geriatrician **Steve Denson, MD**, in Milwaukee. ACE inhibitors tend to produce less orthostatic hypotension than beta blockers do, he advises.

Central alpha blockers, such as clonidine, pose the greatest risk of orthostatic hypotension and falls, counsels Kamel. Clonidine is also associated with confusion and depression, he adds.