

Pediatric High-Alert Medications: Evidence-Based Safe Practices for Nursing Professionals



By Jill Duncan, RN, MS, MPH, and Jason Corcoran, PharmD, BCPS

Learning objectives

- Identify the key differences in providing pharmaceutical care to pediatric patients
- Recognize the importance of a systems approach to medication safety in pediatric patients
- Explain the special considerations necessary when formulating adult dosage forms for pediatric administration
- Identify the “six rights” of safe pediatric high-alert medication administration
- Describe the role that The Joint Commission’s National Patient Safety Goals play in pediatric high-alert medication safety initiatives
- Identify the role that error reporting plays in improving pediatric high-alert medication safety
- Describe the role technology plays in pediatric high-alert medication safety
- Identify at least two recent technological advances found to be effective in preventing pediatric medication errors
- Identify at least two pharmacy processes that can improve pediatric high-alert medication safety
- Recognize the safety implications of using the correct syringe type for oral and intravenous medications
- Illustrate child-friendly and developmentally friendly techniques that are useful when administering medications to children ranging in age from infancy through adolescence
- Recognize why anticoagulant medications are considered pediatric high-alert medications
- Describe the anticoagulant medications most commonly used in pediatric patients
- Identify at least three ways to prevent errors when administering anticoagulant medications to pediatric patients
- Recognize why chemotherapeutic agents are considered pediatric high-alert medications
- Describe the chemotherapeutic agents most commonly used in pediatric patients
- Identify at least three ways to prevent errors when administering chemotherapeutic agents to pediatric patients
- Recognize why concentrated electrolytes are considered pediatric high-alert medications
- Describe the concentrated electrolytes most commonly used in pediatric patients
- Identify at least three ways to prevent errors when administering concentrated electrolytes to pediatric patients
- Recognize why cardiovascular medications are considered pediatric high-alert medications
- Describe the cardiovascular medications most commonly used in pediatric patients
- Identify at least three ways to prevent errors when administering cardiovascular medications to pediatric patients
- Recognize why hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic agents are considered pediatric high-alert medications
- Describe the hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic agents most commonly used in pediatric patients
- Identify at least three ways to prevent errors when administering hypoglycemic and hyperglycemic agents to pediatric patients
- Recognize why neuromuscular blockers (NMBs) are considered a pediatric high-alert medication
- Describe the NMBs most commonly used in pediatric patients
- Identify at least three ways to prevent errors at the point of administration when administering NMBs to pediatric patients
- Recognize why some medications used to treat pediatric pain and provide sedation are considered pediatric high-alert medications
- Describe the classes of medication used for pain and sedation treatment in pediatric patients
- Identify at least three ways to prevent errors when administering pain medications to pediatric patients
- List at least five common safety components of any pediatric sedation program