

# Newsflash

Issue 2020.08

## Generic Releases

The following brand drugs have lost their patents:

<b>Drug</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Date</b>
Contempla XR	ADHD	Jun 19
Protonix Susp	PPI	Jun 30
Jadenu	CIOS	Jul 14
Demser	Cancer	Jul 24

## First Aid Preparedness

Having the right tools and learning a few key skills can help you take charge of an emergency before aid arrives. What you can do.

**Always have your cell phone handy.** If the situation requires an ambulance or emergency medical help, it's much easier to call 911 if you have a cell phone with you. (Keep the dispatcher on speaker.)

**Pack a well-stocked first aid kit.** Have one in your home, your car, and your bag. The more supplies you have on hand, the more easily you will be able to help.

**Download a first aid app.** The Red Cross First Aid app is available free in app stores. It includes step-by-step instructions and videos on how to handle a variety of medical emergencies.

**Take a class.** Learn basic first aid techniques in an online or in-person class offered by organizations such as the Red Cross. A class should cover the scenarios above and more, including burns, poisoning, and severe allergic reactions.

Previous issues of Newsflash can be viewed under "PBM Resources>Newsletters>Clinical" at: [www.MC-Rx.com](http://www.MC-Rx.com)

## How to prepare for a Virtual Doctor's Visit

If you or your child is new to telehealth, you should know a few things before you hop online for your first visit.

- **Check that you have the right equipment.** Most telehealth visits involve a video component. To be able to connect using both video and audio requires the use of a smartphone, tablet, or computer connected to the internet. You may also need to download an app or software to connect with the provider. Before your first visit, be sure you have the right hardware, that it is powered up and ready to go at the time of your appointment, and remember that you also have to have a good internet connection for the software to work properly. Not always, an easy task for all, but a stronger signal means a smoother, more stable and reliable connection.
- **Check with your insurance company.** Rules and regulations are changing rapidly, especially in light of the coronavirus pandemic. It is always best to double check with your health insurance provider whether a particular telehealth session will be covered prior to the session.
- **Sit in a quiet, comfortable, well-lit place.** Though it might be challenging right now to find a space separate from others who may also be home from work and school, do your best to find a quiet, comfortable corner with as few distractions and as little noise as possible. Do not sit in the car or outside in a noisy environment, and make sure that the room is light enough so that your provider can see your face clearly.
- **Be aware the call might drop.** Be ready in case the call drops, because with so many of us now working from home and making demands on internet bandwidth, the connection could be disrupted. Your physician's office will normally re-connect to continue the session.
- **Maximize your audio.** Often, using headphones or earbuds can make it much easier to hear the person on the other side of the call. Wearing these devices also helps improve the privacy of the conversation.
- **Prepare as you would for any other visit.** It's a good idea to sit down prior to any doctor visit to jot down some notes or list any symptoms you want to discuss. This will help you organize your thoughts and prevent you from forgetting anything important. If your visit is related to mental health, you should also come into the first session with an idea of what you want to share.
- **Be patient.** There is a "learning curve" associated with getting the software set up and functional. Plan a few extra minutes before the session to make sure the speakers are turned on, the video is working properly and you have a good internet connection. It is important to stay patient during the call because sometimes there is lag time because the internet is overloaded. The screen might freeze, but it usually resolves quickly. Roll with the punches as best you can and know that your clinician is working to get back in touch with you as quickly as possible.
- **Arrive with an open mind.** Keep an open mind, especially if you're a bit skeptical about telehealth. Therapy can definitely provide the support you need right now in these very uncertain and anxious times. Don't feel like you have to put your mental health progress on hold right now. You can access help right now.

## Summertime Drug Precautions

Some drugs can make your skin sensitive to sunlight, increasing the risk of sunburns and rashes. Others can diminish thirst or interfere with sweating, making heatstroke more likely. Common drugs such as blood pressure drugs losartan and valsartan can increase the risk of dehydration; and NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen and naproxen can increase sun sensitivity. Ask your pharmacist, or do a quick check online, to find out if you should be concerned about any of the medications you take. If your drug does increase these risks, be extra careful avoiding the sun and heat.

### STAY COOL

Take these steps to avoid heatstroke, which can rapidly escalate to a medical emergency:

**Drink up.** Consume extra nonalcoholic drinks even if you are not thirsty. If you take a diuretic or have a medical reason to limit fluid intake, ask your doctor how much you should drink.

**Find air conditioning.** Seek refuge, especially during the heat of the day.

**Take it easy.** Don't exercise or work strenuously when it's sweltering.

**Watch for overheating.** If you develop a headache, light-headedness, nausea, weakness, or rapid breathing or pulse, lie down and elevate your feet. Apply wet cloths to your skin and use a fan. Every 15 minutes drink a half cup of water, a sports drink, or a solution of 1 tsp of salt in a quart of water. If you are with someone who faints, becomes confused or feverish, or feels worse despite treatment, call 911.

### HIDE FROM THE SUN

Some medications can cause a sensitivity to the sun that persists long after you stop using them. And even a temporary sunburn can make you miserable for a few days, and ruin a vacation. To avoid problems, follow these steps.

**Seek shade,** especially in the middle of the day when the sun is the strongest.

**Choose the right sunscreen.** Look for one with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. Apply 2 to 3 tablespoons. Reapply every 2 hours, or after sweating or swimming.

**Cover up.** Wear a wide-brimmed hat and tightly woven long-sleeved shirt and long pants, particularly if you will be out in the full sun for an extended period.

**Take your medication at night, if possible.** That reduces the amount of it in your system during daylight, lowering the risk of skin reaction.



## Ease Arthritis Pain Safely

If you have arthritis pain and have suffered a heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure, stroke, or ulcer, or are at risk for them, you should choose your pain reliever carefully. Common medicines such as ibuprofen (*Advil* and generic) and naproxen (*Aleve* and generic) can help relieve aches and minor injuries, but they can also trigger or worsen cardiovascular and gut problems.

Our review of the pain relievers known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, found that all of them are equally effective but that some may be safer than others may. For example, naproxen does not appear to pose the same heart attack and stroke risk as the other NSAIDs, (except for heart-protecting aspirin), and celecoxib (*Celebrix*) is easier on the stomach.

People at high risk of a heart attack, stroke, or bleeding should first try acetaminophen (*Tylenol* and generic), which is a different type of pain reliever and doesn't trigger those conditions. If that doesn't ease your pain enough, naproxen might make sense, or ibuprofen. If you have an increased risk of intestinal bleeding, you might consider celecoxib after acetaminophen. It has a lower risk of serious ulcer complications compared with other NSAIDs.

NSAIDs applied to the skin – diclofenac gel (*Voltaren*), drops (*Pennsaid*), and patches (*Flector*) – may be worth a try if you have heart or intestinal problems. Studies suggest that they cause less internal bleeding. And because there are lower levels of the drug in the body, they might pose a lower risk of heart attack and stroke. However, more studies are needed to confirm this.