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Ozempic® Overzealous Priming

Ozempic® is a non-insulin injection that does an excellent job of stabilizing sugars, preventing CV events, and promoting weight loss. It is provided in a pen format which contains a fixed number of doses. It is also quite expensive, with each pen costing roughly \$225.

There have been several instances recently where Ozempic® has been ordered earlier than expected. Nurses are telling us that there is not enough medication in the pen to deliver the final dose of 0.5 or 1mg. We took a quick look into this situation and identified the likely problem; Ozempic® pens are being treated like insulin pens. This is not surprising, since insulin pen use is so common in our homes. The two products are quite different, however, especially in the way they are primed.

Insulin pens are primed with every injection. **Ozempic® is only primed once** with the initial injection. After the needle is applied, the pen is “dialed” to show the flow check

symbol (••—) in the dosing window. With the pen upright, the plunger is depressed. If a drop or more appears at the needle tip, the priming process is complete. If not, the process can be repeated. **When new needles are attached for subsequent injections, the pen is not to be primed.** All staff using Ozempic® should view this short video (link below) showing the steps for proper administration. The video is directed toward community patients and shows a needle that is not medically protected: <https://ozempic.ca/administration-video-EN>. You may also want to view the product information guide (link below). On page 11 it states “If Ozempic pen is already in use, go to step 3 – select your dose”: <https://www.novo-pi.com/ozempic.pdf#guide>

Reportable Tramadol

I’d like to bring a drug scheduling change to everyone’s attention. All tramadol-containing products have been added to Schedule I of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA). This will not affect the way tramadol products are stored in the medication cart, as they were already locked in the narcotic bin. Prescribers will now be required to follow more stringent prescription writing guidelines. Schedule I of the CDSA is a listing of fully reportable narcotics, such as hydromorphone, morphine and

fentanyl. As a result, all prescriptions must include dispensing quantities, and if a tramadol product is to be used for an extended time, part-fill formatting will be required. If some mandatory information is missing, GeriatRx will send a proper narcotic Rx to sign or a digital Rx to be signed electronically into your *Digital Prescriber* program to ensure you satisfy this new status.

Freestyle and Pacemakers

ODB coverage for the Freestyle Libre was granted back in September of 2019. The system’s popularity has soared, but a major warning limited its use among some residents. There were concerns the energy output from the sensor could affect pacemaker devices. We were quick to warn our homes to avoid Freestyle in these residents.

Now the manufacturer, Abbott Pharmaceuticals, has modified this warning message. Abbott has a pacemaker division and they tested Freestyle on some patients using their pacemakers. They have cleared their pacemakers to be used with Freestyle, and state they “do not anticipate any interference between continuous glucose monitoring systems and pacemakers”. Although they cannot formally approve pacemakers made by other companies, this may open the Freestyle door to a few more residents in our facilities.

Prepared by Randy Goodman
Certified Geriatric Pharmacist