



## THE BOSWELL BULLETIN

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### Boswell Pharmacy Services

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Part of a family owned business of three pharmacies and an automated closed-door institutional pharmacy located in Western, PA. Boswell Pharmacy Services has been providing pharmacy services for 40 years.

- Boswell Pharmacy Services
- Boswell Prescription Center
- Penn Laurel Pharmacy
- Martella's Pharmacy



Welcome Fall! This is a beautiful time of year with the leaves changing colors and the cool crisp air. However, this is also a time of year when millions of people become infected with the flu. The following is a recommended list of people who should receive annual flu vaccinations: children aged 6 months to 5 years, pregnant women, people  $\geq 50$  years of age, people living in nursing homes or

other long-term care facilities, people with certain chronic medical conditions such as renal, hepatic, pulmonary, cardiovascular, hematological, or metabolic disorders, and people who live with or care for the previously mentioned candidates. Also, anyone who wants to decrease their risk of contracting the flu should receive the vaccine. There are currently two vaccines available. The inactivated vaccine is administered intramuscularly and the live attenuated vaccine is administered nasally. The inactivated vaccine is approved

for people aged 6 months or older including those with chronic medical conditions. The live attenuated vaccine is approved for healthy people aged 5 to 49 who are not pregnant. People who are immunocompromised should not receive the live attenuated vaccine. Administration of the flu vaccine is recommended beginning in October through November. However, the flu season peaks in December and can last up until May, so vaccinations can be received later than December if needed.

## Drug News and New Drugs

### Omacor® name change

Reliant Pharmaceuticals, Inc. has changed the brand name of Omacor® (omega-3-acid ethyl esters) to Lovaza®. This name change is due to possible confusion between Omacor® and Amicar® (aminocaproic acid). Lovaza® can be used in addition to diet to reduce very high triglyceride levels ( $\geq 500$ mg/dL). The usual dose is 4g/day.

### Exelon® available in a patch

Exelon® (rivastigmine) is now available as a transdermal patch. This medication is used to treat dementia in patients who have Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. An advantage of the patch is that it is applied once a day whereas the oral tablets are dosed twice daily. Plus the patch causes less nausea and vomiting. The Exelon® patch is available in 4.6mg and 9.5mg strengths. If a patient is currently taking less than 6 mg/day of the oral formulation then the 4.6mg patch should be used.

The 9.5mg patch should be used when converting from higher doses. The first patch may be applied the day after the last oral dose has been taken.

### Lantus available in a pen

Lantus® (insulin glargine) is now available in a prefilled pen called Lantus®SoloStar®. The dial dose on the pen can be set from 1 to 80 units. The dose however, cannot be dialed more than the remaining number of units left in the pen. When not refrigerated, Lantus® SoloStar® is good for up to 28 days.

### Seroquel XR®

In our summer 2007 issue, we wrote about Seroquel XR® (quetiapine). This new extended release antipsychotic is now currently available in 200mg, 300mg and 400mg strength tablets.

### New Medications

Chantix® (varenicline) is a new non-nicotine agent used to aid in smoking cessation treatment. The patient must first set a target quit date (TQD) and the medication is started a week before this date by an increasing dose titration. Chantix® should be taken for 12 weeks with the following dosing regimen; Days 1-3: 0.5mg PO QD. Days 4-7: 0.5mg PO BID. Remainder of treatment: 1mg PO BID. If patients have been successful quitters, an additional 12 weeks of treatment is recommended to help ensure long-term abstinence. The most common side effects were nausea, sleep disturbances, constipation, flatulence, and vomiting. Chantix® should be taken after eating with a full glass of water. If patients were unsuccessful at quitting, they should be encouraged to try again. GetQuit® is a personalized behavioral support program available through Chantix®.

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## Drug News and New Drugs

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Neupro® (rotigotine) is a transdermal patch used to treat the signs and symptoms of early-stage idiopathic Parkinson's disease. Some of these symptoms are rigidity, tremor at rest, cognitive and psychiatric changes, sensory symptoms, and sleep disturbances. Neupro® is designed to deliver consistent drug concentrations over a period of 24 hours. The patch should be applied to clean, dry, healthy skin on the abdomen, thigh, hip, flank, shoulder, or upper arm. A new patch should be applied daily at the same time every day. The site at which the patch is applied should be rotated and not used more than one time in a 14 day period. The patch should be removed if the patient is to undergo a MRI or cardioversion. Also, excessive heat, such as prolonged sunlight, heating pads, and hot tubs, should be avoided because an increased amount of drug may be absorbed. Some adverse effects include, skin irritation at the patch site, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, and dizziness. Neupro® is available in 2mg, 4mg, and 6mg strengths.

Symbicort® (budesonide/formoterol) is a new inhaler for asthma. It contains both a corticosteroid and a long-acting beta-agonist and is thought to be an alternative to Advair® (fluticasone/ salmeterol). Symbicort® should be dosed 2 puffs twice daily for maintenance therapy of asthma that is not controlled on inhaled corticosteroids alone. Some prescribers may in-

struct patients to use Symbicort® for acute exacerbations instead of albuterol as it is being approved and used like this in other countries. However, patients should not exceed 8 puffs per day or 4 puffs per day if also using albuterol.

Exforge® (amlodipine/valsartan) is a new combination drug for hypertension. This drug is the first to contain a calcium channel blocker and an angiotensin II receptor blocker. Exforge® is available in four different strengths: 5mg or 10mg of amlodipine combined with either 160mg or 320mg of valsartan.

Xyzal® (levocetirizine) a new H1 receptor antagonist is used for treating seasonal and perennial allergic rhinitis symptoms in patients 6 years of age or older. The recommended dose is 5mg in the evening for adults and children older than age 12 and 2.5mg in children aged 6 to 11. This medication can cause sedation so caution should be used.

### New Generic Medications

DuoNeb® (albuterol-ipratropium) inhalation solution is now available as a generic product. It contains 0.5mg of ipratropium and 3mg of albuterol.

Lamisil® (terbinafine) is now available as a generic product. This oral antifungal is available in a 250mg tablet. The over-the-counter cream is also available generically.

Coreg® (carvedilol) is now generic. This beta blocker with alpha blocking activity tablet is available in 3.125mg, 6.25mg, 12.5mg, and 25mg strengths.

### Medication Error Prevention:

#### Abbreviations

Avoid the use of trailing zeros and "naked" zeros. An example of a trailing zero is 25.0 mg, which could be mistaken for 250 mg. This should be written as **25** mg to avoid any confusion. An example of a "naked" zero is .5 mg, which could be mistaken for 5 mg. This should be written as **0.5** mg to avoid any confusion.

#### Sound-alike/Look-alike Drugs

Always be on the alert for drugs that either sound or look-alike. This can be a common cause for medication errors. Similarity between drug names, either brand or generic, can cause confusion and lead to errors. Examples:

- Terbinafine / Terbutaline
- Lamisil®/ Lamictal®/ Lomotil®
- Lovaza® / Lorazepam®
- Neupro® / Neupogen®

## Ask The Pharmacists

**Question:** Should I as a healthcare worker, receive a flu shot?

**Answer:** Yes, it is highly recommended that healthcare workers receive annual flu shots. This will decrease their chances of contracting the flu as well as spreading it to their patients.

**Question:** Can a patient aged 65 receive the nasally administered flu vaccine?

**Answer:** No, the nasally administered flu vaccine is a live attenuated vaccine. It is only approved in healthy patients aged 5 to 49 who are not pregnant. Also, patients who are immunocompromised should not receive this vaccine. The alternative is to receive the inactivated vaccine, which is administered intramuscularly.

