

### What we've been doing...

Green Tree Pharmacy dispensed nearly 70,000 prescriptions in 2023 at over 100 facilities throughout the state of Illinois.

We appreciate your support and wish you a safe and Happy New Year in 2024.

Our new clean room is nearly complete which will allow for extended beyond use dating of sterile infusions, hazardous sterile and non-sterile compounding (including chemotherapy infusions) and offer more flexibility in dosing.

### Rumor vs. Truth...

**Rumor...** Medication administration timing of tetracycline antibiotics (ie: doxycycline) can be given at 0800/1600 with other medication.

**Truth...** It is important to separate tetracyclines at least 2 hours from iron supplements, multivitamins, calcium supplements or antacids.

### Suggestions/Comments...

We'd love to hear how we are doing and are always open to your feedback to improve our services. Please call 1-800-913-8174 or visit our website [greentreepharm.com](http://greentreepharm.com) and click "contact us" to submit the request / comment.



## Highlights

Hot Topics: Updates/ New Products p1

New Products / Supply Issues p1

Operations Tips and Tricks p1

Kidney Month/DVT month p2

Regulatory Update / Review p2

Clinical Focus: Polypharmacy p2

## News from Our Pharmacy Operations Team

### Urgent Need to Increase Immunization Coverage for Influenza, COVID-19, and RSV and Use of Authorized/Approved Therapeutics in the Setting of Increased Respiratory Disease Activity During the 2023-2024 Winter Season per CDC:

Respiratory disease activity is trending up, but vaccination rates are trending low. As of November 18, pharmacies and doctor's offices had administered 7.4 million fewer doses of influenza vaccine than during the same period of the previous cycle.

Only 17.2% of U.S. adults, 9.6% of expecting mothers, and 7.7% of minors aged 6 months to 17 years have received the latest COVID vaccines as of December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Only 15.9% of adults aged 60 years or older are protected against RSV.

The low immunization uptake is setting the scene for more severe illness and a greater burden on the U.S. health care system. Since December 1st, hospitalizations among all age groups increased by 200% for influenza, 51% for COVID-19, and 60% for RSV.

Healthcare providers should recommend antiviral medications for influenza and COVID-19 for all eligible patients, especially those at high-risk progression to severe disease such as older adults and those with underlying medical conditions.

### Pharmacy Team Spotlight:



Candi Mangan has been an integral part of the billing department. Candi jumped in and stepped up when the billing department lost two of our senior employees.

She remains positive even when it feels like we just cannot do anything else. She uses H to O philosophy by going the extra mile to always help others. Candi will take responsibility for her own actions and when necessary is not afraid to admit she is wrong and apologize. Candi has taken on responsibility for the training plan for the department. She is very organized and keeps everything flowing smoothly on the team. We appreciate Candi's dedication and teamwork.

### Operations Tips and Tricks

Be sure to communicate with pharmacy when medications from the convenience boxes have been used to ensure timely replenishment and eliminate the need for utilizing a back-up pharmacy due to stock-outs.

### Health Awareness Months:

January:

National Blood Donor Month

February:

American Heart Month

National Cancer Prevention Month

March:

DVT Awareness Month

National Kidney Month

March 17-23:

National Poison Prevention Week

# Clinical Acorns and Guidelines

## Regulatory Update/ Review

**FDA warns consumers not to purchase or use certain eye drops from several major brands due to risk of eye infection.**

Green Tree Pharmacy has stocked and sent out the two Rugby brands involved in the recall (all lots are being recalled by the manufacturer).

Your consultant pharmacists have pulled many of these drops from the med carts. Please return if you find any of the following by Rugby:

Lubricating eye drops 15 mL (polyvinyl alcohol 1.4%)  
NDC: 0536-1325-94

Lubricating Tears Eye Drops 15mL (dextran/Hypromellose 0.1%/0.3%)

NDC: 0536-1282-94

**Be prepared. Text. Save. Share.**



Text POISON to 797979 & save Poison Control vCard to your phone.

## Clinical Focus: Polypharmacy

39% of seniors over age 65 take five or more medications. When managing several chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure and heart failure, the use of multiple medications is often clinically necessary. Polypharmacy becomes problematic when the reason for the medication is unclear, when medication is taken to treat side effects of other drugs, when dosing and timing are complicated, and when medications interact with each other.

Some of the drugs most involved in prescribing cascade are:

- Opioids
- NSAIDs
- Antihypertensives
- Antibiotics
- Dementia medication

Patients taking 5 to 9 medications have a 50% chance of an adverse drug interaction.

Adverse drug events cause up to 30% of all geriatric hospital admissions. Studies have shown there is an increased risk of falls as the number of medications increases, as well with specific classes of drugs, such as antipsychotics.

Polypharmacy has been found to reduce physical function in older adults and has been linked to lowered cognitive function. There is also an increased risk of medication errors due to the amount of medication being given.

To minimize polypharmacy, deprescribing is a decision-making process that is intended to taper or stop medications. This may be performed if the harm outweighs the benefits given a patient's goals, preferences, life expectancy, and other factors. Pharmacists can assist in this process by regularly reviewing medications and the appropriateness of each one and recommending discontinuation or reductions in medications as they review a resident's medical record.



## March is National Kidney Month:

Kidney disease is often referred to as a "silent disease" because there are usually no symptoms during its early stages.

You are more likely to develop kidney disease if you have diabetes, heart disease, obesity, smoking history, age 60+ or have family history. You can protect your kidneys by preventing/managing health conditions that cause kidney damage (diabetes & high blood pressure).

A blood test: Glomerular filtration rate (GFR) and a urine test: albumin-to-creatinine ratio (ACR) may be done to determine kidney function if you are at risk for kidney disease. Having a GFR under 60 and/or a uACR over 30 for 3 months or more is a sign you may have kidney disease.

ACE inhibitors, ARBs, and SGLT2 inhibitors may protect your kidneys. NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen and naproxen, can damage kidneys.

## Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT):

DVTs can be life threatening because blood clots can travel to the lungs (pulmonary embolism).

Symptoms of DVT in the leg are:

- Throbbing pain in 1 leg (rarely both legs), usually in the calf or thigh
- Swelling in 1 leg (rarely both legs)
- Warm skin
- Red or darkened skin
- Swollen veins that are hard/sore

A DVT is more likely to happen if:

- Age 60+
- Overweight
- DVT history
- Take contraceptives
- Have cancer/heart failure
- Varicose veins history
- Immobile

Diagnosis: ultrasound scan

Treatment includes blood thinning medication for at least 3 months.