

CHAPTER 7

Over-the-Counter Drugs and Herbal Products

Eliza Rivera-Mitu, RN, MSN
NDEG 26 A

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Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drugs

- Nonprescription drugs
- Account for more than 60% of all medications used in the United States
- OTC Drug Review (1972)
 - Safety and efficacy
 - Reclassification

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Criteria for OTC Status

- Indication for use
- Safety profile
- Practical for OTC use

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TABLE 7-2
CRITERIA FOR OTC STATUS

Indication for Use	Safety Profile	Practical for OTC Use
Consumer must be able to easily: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnose condition • Monitor effectiveness 	Drug should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favorable adverse-event profile • Limited drug-interaction profile • Low potential for abuse 	Drug should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to use • Easy to monitor

OTC, Over-the-counter.

Table 7-2 Criteria for OTC status

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Figure 7-1 Example of an OTC drug label.

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Use of OTCs

- May delay effective treatment of more chronic disease states
- May delay treatment of serious and/or life-threatening disorders
- May relieve symptoms of a disorder but not the cause

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Herbal Products

- Herbal medicine
- Commission E Monographs (Germany)
- Alternative medicine

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Herbal Products (cont'd)

- Dietary Supplement and Health Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994
 - Herbal products are considered “dietary supplements”
 - No proof of efficacy or safety required
 - No standards for quality control
 - May claim effect but do not have to promise a specific cure

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Herbal Products (cont'd)

- Dietary Supplement and Health Education Act (DSHEA) of 1994 (cont'd)
 - FDA must prove a product unsafe; the manufacturer is not required to prove safety

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Consumer Use of Herbs

- Therapeutic agents for treatment and cure of diseases
- Prophylactic agents for long-term prevention of disease
- Proactive agents to maintain health and wellness and “boost” one’s immune system

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TABLE 7-4

CONVENTIONAL MEDICINES DERIVED FROM PLANTS

Medicine*	Plant
atropine	<i>Atropa belladonna</i>
capsaicin	<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>
cocaine	<i>Erythroxylon coca</i>
codeine	<i>Papaver somniferum</i>
ipecac	<i>Cephaelis ipecacuanha</i>
quinine	<i>Cinchona officinalis</i>
reserpine	<i>Rauwolfia serpentina</i>
scopolamine	<i>Datura fastuosa</i>
senna	<i>Cassia acutifolia</i>
taxol	<i>Taxus brevifolia</i>
vincristine	<i>Catharanthus roseus</i>

*Includes both over-the-counter and prescription drugs.

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Table 7-4 Conventional medicines derived from plants

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Conditions Treated by Herbal Products

- Anxiety
- Colds
- Cough
- Headache
- Insomnia
- Ulcers
- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- Arthritis
- Constipation
- Fever
- Infection
- Stress
- Weakness

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Commonly Used Herbal Products

- Aloe
- Feverfew
- Ginkgo
- Goldenseal
- Kava
- Saw palmetto
- Echinacea
- Garlic
- Ginseng
- Hawthorn
- St. John's wort
- Valerian

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Nursing Implications

- Obtain thorough medication history, documenting all medications used (prescription, OTC, herbal products)
- Assess level of education and understanding
- Assess for information specific to various agents

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Nursing Implications (cont'd)

- Assess system functions (especially renal, liver, and cardiac)
- Assess for conditions that are contraindications
- Assess for potential drug-drug and drug-herb interactions

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Nursing Implications (cont'd)

- Provide thorough and individualized patient education
- Ensure that patients recognize that manufacturers of herbal products are not required to prove safety and effectiveness

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Nursing Implications (cont'd)

- Herbal products may not be safe for pregnant or breast-feeding women, infants, children
- “Natural” does not mean safe
- Teach patients to monitor themselves for unusual or adverse reactions as well as therapeutic responses

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