

Purpose

The **ISMP Medication Safety Self Assessment® for High-Alert Medications** is designed to:

- Heighten healthcare providers' awareness of critical safe medication systems and practices associated with high-alert medications
- Assist healthcare providers with identifying and prioritizing opportunities for reducing patient harm when prescribing, preparing, dispensing, and administering high-alert medications
- Create a baseline of national efforts to enhance safety when prescribing, preparing, dispensing, and administering high-alert medications
- Determine the challenges healthcare providers face in keeping patients safe during high-alert medication use

ISMP is not a standards setting organization. As such, the self-assessment items in this document are not purported to represent a minimum standard of practice and should not be considered as such. In fact, some of the self-assessment items represent innovative practices and system enhancements that are not widely implemented in healthcare facilities today. However, their value in reducing errors is grounded in scientific research and/or expert analysis of errors with high-alert medications and their causes.

The **ISMP Medication Safety Self Assessment® for High-Alert Medications** and its components are copyrighted by ISMP and may not be used in whole or in part for any other purpose or by any other entity except for self assessment of medication systems by healthcare facilities as part of their ongoing quality improvement activities. The aggregate results of this assessment will be used for research and educational purposes only.

Targeted High-Alert Medications

The **ISMP Medication Safety Self Assessment® for High-Alert Medications** offers hospitals, long-term care facilities, and certain outpatient facilities, such as ambulatory surgery centers, emergency/urgent care facilities, oncology clinics, treatment centers, dental surgery centers, endoscopy centers, and diagnostic testing centers, a unique opportunity to assess the safety of systems and practices with up to 11 categories of high-alert medications:

- **Neuromuscular Blocking Agents** (1 demographic question, 15 self-assessment items)
- **Concentrated Electrolytes Injection** (26 self-assessment items)
- **Magnesium Sulfate Injection** (2 demographic questions, 22 self-assessment items)
- **Moderate Sedation in Adults and Children, Minimal Sedation in Children** (40 self-assessment items)
- **Insulin, Subcutaneous and Intravenous** (5 demographic questions, 45 self-assessment items)
- **Lipid-Based Medications and Conventional Counterparts** (9 self-assessment items)
- **Methotrexate for Non-Oncologic Use** (7 self-assessment items)
- **Chemotherapy, Oral and Parenteral** (5 demographic questions, 48 self-assessment items)
- **Anticoagulants** (1 demographic question, 43 self-assessment items)
- **Neuraxial Opioids and/or Local Anesthetics** (32 self-assessment items)
- **Opioids** (60 self-assessment items)

The assessment also includes a set of general assessment items (33 in total) that are applicable to all or most high-alert medications.

Not all the targeted high-alert medications may be used in every inpatient or outpatient facility; thus, **each facility can choose one or more of these high-alert medications upon which to focus its assessment**. However, we strongly encourage all facilities to complete

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the assessment for every high-alert medication category used in their facility. All facilities using the assessment to evaluate systems and practices associated with one or more high-alert medication categories should also complete the general assessment items.

Some high-alert medications have fewer self-assessment items than other larger categories of high-alert medications, so the total number of assessment items will vary based on which categories are chosen for analysis.

The assessment includes general demographic questions. A few of the high-alert medication categories also have one or more drug-specific demographic questions. The demographic data will only be used to analyze the aggregate findings from the self assessment and allow demographically similar organizations to compare themselves to others. The demographic questions do not ask for any contextually identifiable information.

All facilities submitting data to ISMP must complete the demographic questions and general high-alert medications section of the assessment.

Detailed instructions for completing the assessment can be found starting on page 10.