Maximizing Patient Interaction at the Pharmacy Counter
OTC Medications for Allergic Rhinitis and the Common Cold
Posttest/Rationale

1. A customer asks the technician the cause of allergic rhinitis (AR). Which of the following best describes the causative agent for AR?
   A. The common cold
   B. Inhalation of an allergen***
   C. Prednisone
   D. None of the above

Correct Answer: B
Allergic rhinitis is the body’s response to inhalation of an aeroallergen, including such substances as pollen, pollutants, and cat dander.

2. A patient wishes to purchase the nasal formulation of cromolyn sodium for allergic rhinitis. Which symptom or condition should the technician ask about before speaking to the pharmacist?
   A. Muscle pains
   B. Headache
   C. Diarrhea
   D. Fever***

Correct Answer: D
Cromolyn sodium (Nasalcrom) is not recommended (without physician supervision) if the patient has fever, discolored nasal discharge, sinus pain, or wheezing.

3. The parents of a 3-year-old male tell the technician that the child has rhinorrhea and sneezing, and his nose is itching. What is their optimal therapeutic option, based only on this information?
   A. Diphenhydramine
   B. Loratadine***
   C. Pseudoephedrine
   D. Clemastine

Correct Answer: B
Benadryl (diphenhydramine) and Tavist Allergy (clemastine) are contraindicated in patients under the age of 6 years, as they may cause paradoxical excitation. Sudafed is not to be used in patients under the age of 4 years, and it is not effective for sneezing and nasal itching of AR in any case. Claritin (loratadine) is effective for symptoms of allergic rhinitis, such as the rhinorrhea, sneezing and nasal itching.

4. A female patient would like to use an oral antihistamine for her allergic rhinitis, but she also enjoys sipping fruit juices throughout the day. Which would not be an appropriate choice for her?
   A. Fexofenadine***
   B. Triamcinolone
   C. Cetirizine
   D. Loratadine

Correct Answer: A
Patients should not take fexofenadine with fruit juices or with antacids containing aluminum or magnesium.

5. Technicians should be alert to the abuse of nonprescription products. Which of the following is abused because of its addictive potential?
   A. Guaifenesin
   B. Propylhexedrine***
   C. Cromolyn sodium
   D. Fexodenadine

Correct Answer: B
Propylhexedrine Inhalers are abused, and certain websites provide details on how teens and others can get “high” from their abuse.

6. During a discussion about treating the common cold, a patient mentions to the technician that she is taking a medication known as tranylcypromine. Which of these drugs are contraindicated with tranylcypromine?
   A. Dextromethorphan and pseudoephedrine***
   B. Loratadine and nasal strips
   C. Menthol lozenges and cetirizine
   D. Guaifenesin and diphenhydramine
Correct Answer: A
Oral nasal decongestants and dextromethorphan should not be used with MAOIs such as tranylcypromine or for two weeks after the MAOI has been discontinued.

7. **A male patient complains of nasal blockage, sore throat, and cough. His wife has the same symptoms, and they have lasted for 3 days. He is taking medications for enlarged prostate and depression. What product would be safest to relieve his nasal blockage?**
   A. Nasal strips to help with breathing***
   B. Cetirizine
   C. Pseudoephedrine
   D. Phenylephrine

Correct Answer: A
Patients with trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate should not take pseudoephedrine (Sudafed 12 Hour) or phenylephrine (Sudafed PE). Cetirizine (Zyrtec) is not a good choice for nasal blockage, as it is not a nasal decongestant. However, Breath Right Nasal Strips are safe for patients with an enlarged prostate and may relieve this patient’s nasal blockage.

8. **An adult male patient complains of sore throat. He has diabetes and takes medication for high cholesterol. He denies any other symptoms, including nasal blockage, rhinorrhea, and cough. He would like to purchase a menthol lozenge. What is the best advice to give this patient?**
   A. Sell him a Halls lozenge product instead
   B. Refer him to a physician because of his other medical conditions
   C. Refer him to a physician to explore the cause of his sore throat***
   D. Do not use any product, but gargle with warm salt water

Correct Answer: C
Sore throat can be due to many causes, some can be very serious. Patients can only treat sore throat associated with the common cold. This patient does not have any of the additional symptoms usually caused by the common cold viruses. For this reason, he should see a physician to determine the cause of his sore throat.
9. A patient is complaining of cough and sore throat of the common cold. Which ingredient is effective for sore throat and also for a nonproductive cough?
   A. Dyclonine
   B. Guaifenesin
   C. Menthol***
   D. Phenol

Correct Answer: C
Menthol in lozenge form is effective for both nonproductive cough and the sore throat, when both are due to the common cold.

10. Nonprescription drug products may gain regulatory approval for over-the-counter use by which of the following methods?
   A. OTC drug monograph system
   B. New Drug Application
   C. New Drug Application with supplements
   D. All of the above***

Correct Answer: D
Nonprescription drug products may gain OTC marketing approval via an NDA, NDA with supplements, or the OTC monograph system.