

American Clinicians Academy on Medical Aid in Dying

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Currently Recommended Aid-in-Dying Pharmacology

Updated: June 22, 2021

For details on the basis for these recommendations, please use [this link](#) and see “Pharmacology Update, 6/22/21”

Reminder: Please review the Academy’s [Red Flag Checklist for Potentially Complicated or Prolonged Aid-in-Dying Deaths](#) before prescribing aid-in-dying medications.

The Academy now recommends one single protocol for all patients: DDMAPh.

Digitalis 100mg (from powder, not crushed tablets);

Diazepam 1,000mg;

Morphine 15,000mg;

Amitriptyline 8,000mg;

Phenobarbital 5,000mg.

These are dispensed to the patient as powder, to be mixed with water or clear apple juice to a total volume of 4 ounces shortly before the time of ingestion.

Giving digoxin 30 minutes before the other medications (D-DMAPh) is no longer recommended, but should be considered for patients who are young and thus have “resilient” hearts, or patients with a history of high athleticism, who also have resilient hearts.

Rx and instructions written as:

Step #1

Pre-medications for nausea/vomiting:

Ondansetron 8mg, Metoclopramide 20mg (10mg tabs, #2)

Sig: Take all three pills at least 30 minutes before proceeding to the next step.

Step #2: DDMAPh (At least 30 minutes after Step #1).

Digoxin powder (not from crushed tablets), 100mg; Diazepam 1gm; Morphine 15gms;
Amitriptyline 8gm; Phenobarbital 5gm.

Dispense as powder, in a 4 ounce bottle if available.

Sig: (NOTE: A video of mixing instructions for patients and clinicians is at this link:

<https://vimeo.com/546241500>)

Final volume of suspended medications: 4 ounces.

Do not pour the powder out of the bottle. Add clear (not unfiltered) apple juice (or water) to the bottle, fill halfway, and shake until the powders are fully suspended. Then completely fill the bottle and shake again. Pour the liquid into a drinking glass (or the patient can drink straight from the bottle, or use a straw). If settling occurs before drinking, stir the liquid so that the powders are again suspended. Once you start taking the medication, complete taking it all within two minutes so that you do not fall asleep partially through the dose.

NOTE: Keep iced non-fat sorbet or ice popsicles at the bedside in case there is any burning sensation from the medications. If burning occurs, spoonful of sorbet or ice popsicle will help significantly until sleep comes on within 2 to 10 minutes.