



## Clinical Reasoning / Judgment Tool: Assessing Medications

**PURPOSE:** This tool gives you a memory-jog (**TACIT**) to help you be systematic and complete when assessing medication regimens.

**KEY POINT:** It's not unusual for presenting signs and symptoms (cues) to be related to medication-related issues. Treating patient problems without first considering whether the issues are related to medications may result in harm. To promote sound reasoning, assign **HIGH PRIORITY** to assessing patient's medications early.

1. Ensure **medication reconciliation\***
2. Use **TACIT** – described below – to be systematic and complete when determining whether your patient is taking unnecessary medications or whether signs and symptoms may be medication-related (e.g., hypotension may be related to antihypertensives). \*\*

**T**herapeutic effect: Does the patient demonstrate therapeutic effects of the drugs?

**A**llergic or **A**dverse reactions: Are there signs of drug allergies or adverse reactions?

**C**ontraindications: Are there contraindications to giving/taking any of the drugs?

**I**nteractions: Are there possible interactions among the drugs?

**T**oxicity / **o**verdose: Are there signs of drug toxicity or overdose?

\* **Medication reconciliation** — creating the most complete and accurate list of the patient's current medications and comparing the list to those in the health record or medication orders — should be done at every transition of care. For details, access the following free: Barnsteiner, J. Medication Reconciliation (Chapter 38), in *Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses*. Available at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2648](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2648)

\*\* **If in doubt**, consult a pharmacist, your inter-professional expert partner

**TEXTBOOK TOOL for:** Alfaro-LeFevre, R. (2020). *Critical thinking, Clinical reasoning, and Clinical Judgment: A Practical Approach*. Downloading one copy from <http://www.alfaroteachsmart.com/textbooktools.html> is "fair use" and allowed. Making copies requires permission, unless students are required to purchase the text. . Email: [TeachSmartAlfaro@aol.com](mailto:TeachSmartAlfaro@aol.com)