5-STEP APPROACH TO SGLT2i COUNSELING

1. **Give a “big-picture” overview statement about your recommendation for SGLT2i use by using a “sandwich” (benefits-risks-benefits) approach.**
   Share major anticipated risks and benefits in a straightforward but

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Describe the expected **benefits** (positive features) of using the medication.

- “SGLT2i is a very good medication because it not only improves glucose control and cardiovascular health, but also because it has many significant kidney protective effects/benefits. Specifically, it substantially decreases the risk of kidney failure; slows down the rate of kidney disease progression; reduces the likelihood of needing dialysis or kidney transplantation; and may even decrease the risk of death.”

Share the possible **risks** (negative features) associated with using the medication. It is best to share the most concerning possibilities upfront.

- “The only problem is that SGLT2i has been linked with a very small risk of rare, unusual side effects including severe genital infections and amputation.”
- “More common side effects of SGLT2i are initial worsening of kidney function (but better long-term kidney function), urinary tract infections, and genital yeast infections.”

Emphasize the **benefits** (positive features) of using the medication, applied specifically to the individual patient’s clinical context.

- “I can imagine that some of these side effects may sound scary. But given that our goal is to protect your kidneys in the long run, I think that with close monitoring by our team of doctors and pharmacists, SGLT2i can be very good for you.”
2. Expect and address patient emotion.

Upon hearing about some of the side effects (e.g. genital infections), the patient may become alarmed, worried, or angry, or even immediately refuse to discuss the use of the medication any further. It is critical that the patient’s emotion is addressed; otherwise, he/she will not be able to participate fully in the discussion. If this occurs, pause and allow time for the patient to process this information before proceeding.

The following phrases can be used to address the patient’s emotions:

- **Name the emotion:** “It sounds like you are worried about…”
- **Extend understanding:** “If I understand what you are saying, you are angry that we are offering you a medication that could cause [side effect]…”
- **Offer support:** “My team and I will be here with you throughout the process to check in and monitor how you’re doing on SGLT2i.”
- **Explore further:** “Tell me more about your concern about SGLT2i’s side effects.”
3. Guide the patient to discuss the risks and benefits of

Offer an invitation to proceed with the discussion before continuing.

- "Let's talk about the individual risks and benefits in more detail, so we can better determine if SGLT2i is the right medication for you. How does that sound?"

Discuss the major risks and benefits – SEE EXAMPLE LIST FOR DETAILS

4. Explore patient goals, priorities, and/or concerns

Ask open-ended questions to get a sense of what the patient hopes to achieve or avoid with the use of this medication.

- "Now, given what you’ve heard/learned about SGLT2i,
  - What is most important to you?"
  - What are you hoping for?"
  - What are you most worried about?"
5. Explain how these goals, priorities, and/or concerns fit into the “big picture” using the “Best Case/Worst Case” Tool.

Emphasize continued support and close monitoring by our team of physicians and pharmacists as part of SGLT2i use.

Summarize the patient’s goals, priorities, or concerns.

- **EXAMPLE:** “It sounds like your goal is to avoid dialysis as much as possible, but you are understandably worried about the risk of amputation.”
- **EXAMPLE:** “If I understand correctly, you would rather be on dialysis than get a genital infection, even if the risk of this is extremely low.”

Introduce the “Best Case/Worst Case” Tool.

- “Based on what you’re telling me, I’d like to show you what I think is the best case, worst case, and most likely scenario of how you would do on XXX. How does that sound?”

Map out the patient’s anticipated clinical course on SGLT2i using the “Best Case/Worst Case” Tool – SEE EXAMPLE DIAGRAM FOR DETAILS.

Make a final recommendation.

- **EXAMPLE:** “Based on what we have mapped out here, I strongly recommend using SGLT2i because it can provide significant benefits, especially for protecting the kidneys. In your case, with proper hygiene and close monitoring by our team, the risk of side effects is also very low. Overall, I think SGLT2i would be a very good medication for you. What do you think?”
- **EXAMPLE:** “As you can see, there are many potential benefits to taking SGLT2i, but you have mild peripheral vascular disease (PVD), you are also at slightly higher risk for side effects. We will need to be extra cautious using SGLT2i. I recommend starting SGLT2i and monitoring you very closely over the next few weeks. Our team will be following you and checking in regularly. If we notice any concerning features (e.g. changes in how your legs look or feel), we may need to stop SGLT2i immediately. How does that sound to you?”