

Medicines Awareness

for care homes

Administration of Medication

It is very important that medicines are taken exactly as instructed to ensure they work as intended. If instructions are not accurately followed the medication may interact with another medication, may cause side effects or even cause the condition to deteriorate. The homes guidelines and policies should be followed at all times. Each home should have a medicines policy and all staff should be aware of it and adhere to it.



General guidelines

When administering medication you should;

- Confirm that you are giving the right medicines to the right person. A robust system for identification should be put in place and the use of recent photographs is recommended.
- Assemble all equipment before starting. This should include:
 - All medication to be given at that time of day including fridge items and when required (PRN) medication where appropriate.
 - Medicine tots, water, cups, gloves.
 - The MAR chart
- Ask the person if they want their medicines before they are removed from the packaging. If the medication is refused the person should not be forced to take it and neither should it be given covertly by hiding it in food or drink. Instead it should be offered again a little while later. If the person continues to refuse the manager or lead carer should be informed and the GP may also need to be informed.
- Ensure that the label on the medication matches that on the MAR chart in all respects.
- Check that the dose is clear and if the directions say as required ensure that you understand the circumstances under which they should be offered. E.g. if the tablets are for pain relief establish whether the person has any pain before offering them. Care should be taken to ensure that the medication has not already been administered by another care worker. If a dose of a PRN medicine is administered it is good practice to record it in the care plan.
- Tablets/capsules should be prepared by a clean method. That is they should be pushed out of their packaging directly into a medicine pot and should then be handed to the person. Syrup or mixtures should be administered using the spoon or measure

For further advice please contact the medicines management team at Walsall CCG

Tel. 01922 618388

provided by the pharmacist. Some medicines can be harmful on direct contact with the skin in which case plastic gloves should be worn.

- Once the person has taken the medicine sign the MAR chart in the correct column by the correct medication and administration time. If the medication has been refused the MAR chart should be endorsed with the appropriate code as indicated on the bottom of the MAR chart and a note made on the back of the sheet explaining why it was refused.
- If the medication has a variable dose e.g. 1 or 2 tablets the quantity given must be endorsed on the MAR chart to ensure an accurate audit trail.
- Once the person has received all the medication due to them at that time, and all the entries have been made on the MAR chart the procedure should be repeated with the remaining residents.

Medicines Administration Error

If an error is made advice must always be sought immediately no matter how trivial the error may seem.

Any error must be reported to the person in charge, or their deputy, straight away and the resident's GP should be informed. If the GP practice is closed then advice should be sought from the out of hours service or NHS 111

Details of the error should be recorded in both the accident book and the resident's notes and the person's relatives should be informed.

If the resident has a serious adverse reaction then ring 999 and request an ambulance, ensuring all the information regarding the error is available

There should always be a review to establish how an error occurred in order to prevent a similar error happening again.

To reduce the chance of errors occurring staff must:-

- Keep their knowledge up to date.
- Avoid distractions whilst giving out medication.
- Pay attention to residents' identification.
- Ensure a resident has taken the medication given and not left it or spat it out.

If in any doubt do not give the medication until clarification has been obtained.

If a person has been placed at risk of harm or the error involves a controlled drug it must be reported to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and in the case of an error involving a controlled drug to the 'accountable officer'. Please contact Walsall CCG Medicines Management Team for information on how to contact the accountable officer.

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