

Care About Medicine

Medicines information for staff in a social care setting

Welcome to the second issue of **Care About Medicine** newsletter.

This newsletter aims to provide useful information and guidance about medicines that may be helpful to anyone working within a social care setting. We aim to offer help and support on any medication issue, including safe storage, handling and administration, as well as advice on documentation, policies and procedures. We can also provide advice on medication training issues and competency assessments.

Please contact us if you have any problems or issues concerning medication, for general advice on storage, policies, medication training. You can get in touch by any of the following ways:

Email: CAM@nottspct.nhs.uk or contact

Coral Osborn - Governance & Social Care Pharmacy Advisor Tel: 01623 673028 or email: coral.osborn@nottspct.nhs.uk

Lisa Ryley - Governance & Social Care Technician Tel: 01623 673537 or email: lisa.ryley@nottspct.nhs.uk



Recording in Care Homes

Safe administration and recording of medicines is essential. The Medicines Administration Record (MAR) chart is an important document used to record all the medicines kept in the care home for a service user and the date on which they were administered. Completing a MAR chart accurately, encourages good practice in the recording of medicines to help prevent errors and mal administration and ensures good auditable records are in place for monitoring purposes.

It is the care provider's responsibility to provide accurate MAR charts. The MAR chart should preferably be printed so that the instructions are clear. In front of each service users MAR chart should be a sheet containing the following:

- an up to date photograph
- their name (including the name they like to be called)
- date of birth
- GP's name
- allergies
- patients personal preferences e.g. prefers taking medicines with squash instead of water

The MAR chart should contain:

- Name, date of birth, GP's name
- The dates the MAR chart covers (including year)
- Spaces for the MAR chart to be signed for each dose of each medicine given
- A list of all the current medication stating
 - name of the medicine
 - strength and form e.g. tablet etc
 - dosage as printed on the label
 - the times of day that the medicine should be given
 - any special information such as giving before food
 - when medicine was first prescribed
 - when a medicine was received and how much
 - route of administration e.g. oral, topical etc
- Where an entry has had to be hand written it should be written clearly and legibly and be signed by the person making the entry and by the person who checked the entry.
- If the dose is variable how much is given must be recorded e.g. one or two or 5 or 10ml.
- The MAR chart should show when an external preparation has been applied. If the service user applies their own cream/ointment, the date the preparation is given to the service user should be documented on the MAR chart so the expiry date is known.
- Where a cream/ointment/lotion is applied by a carer as part their personal care routine the person applying the preparation should sign the MAR. A separate MAR chart can be kept in the service users room.
- If a MAR chart is signed in error, or if a service user spits out the medicine, is sick straight after administration, or it is dropped on the floor this should be recorded on the reverse of the MAR chart explaining what has happened for audit purposes.
- The MAR chart should be signed after each medicine is given to the service user by the person giving the medicine and not at the end of the medicine round.
- Where medicines are to be disposed of they should be recorded accurately.
- If a service user is self administering their own medicines make sure it is documented on the MAR chart the date and quantity of the medicine they have been given.

Do You Know Your Expiry Dates?

The expiry date is the point in time when a pharmaceutical product is no longer within an acceptable condition to be considered effective. The medication reaches the end of its 'shelf life'. Depending on the product, the expiry date may be set as a fixed time

- After manufacture
- After dispensing
- After opening of the original container

The shelf life of products is determined by either the break down of the active drug or by risk of contamination.

Basic Storage Guidelines

Medicines can be affected by the conditions they are kept in. As a guide the following points should be respected

- All medication should be kept in the original container in which they were dispensed in and where possible in the original packaging (box) to protect from sun light
- All medicines should be stored in a cool (below 25°C) dry place unless it needs to be kept in a fridge (between 2 and 8°C)
- Medicines should always be stored as recommended by the manufacturer
- The date opened should be recorded and always checked prior to giving
- The expiry date of products can change once opened (see table below)

Expiry dates

Product/Packaging	Suggested expiry date upon opening (unless manufacturers expiry date is shorter)
Tubs of cream/ointment	1 month
Tubes of cream/ointment	3 months
Pump dispenser packs of cream/ointment	Manufacturers expiry date
Oral liquids	6 months (see exceptions below)
Eye/ear/nose drops/ointment	4 weeks
Liquid dietary supplements	Calogen – 14 days if stored in a fridge Fortisip – 24 hours if stored in a fridge

REMEMBER – Always write on the product the date when it is first opened

Some products have a much shorter shelf life than the above e.g. Oramorph solution (90 days), Risperidone liquid (3 months), Gastrocote liquid (1 month), Flamazine (7 days) and liquid antibiotics (see individual bottles). In all cases it is important to consult the manufacturer's information on the pack for information on expiry dates and storage conditions or contact a community pharmacy for advice.

A Quick Reminder

Hospital Admissions - Does the medication go as well?

The answer is yes, but not if it is in pre-filled blister packs. Any medication that is in its original container should accompany the patient into hospital e.g. liquids, inhalers, eye drops etc, along with a complete list of **ALL CURRENT** medication preferably in the form of a photocopy of the most recent MAR chart(s).

Helpful links

The following website's can provide information for carer's and service users:

For what's happening within the county, visit the NHS Nottinghamshire County website:
www.nottspct.nhs.uk

For information on medication issues, a dedicated website for Community Pharmacies with specific area for carers and patients:
www.nottscommunitypharmacy.nhs.uk

For advice on specific conditions visit:
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

For the latest information and guidance for care issues:
www.cqc.org.uk

For information on drug matters, visit:
www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/handlingmedsocialcare.pdf

New Wound Care Oder Forms

All homes providing nursing care now need to be using the updated wound care order forms when ordering wound care products for residents/patients (version 4). Copies of these can be obtained by contacting us (details over the page). All previous versions should be destroyed.

