

Care About Medicine

Medicines information for staff in a social care setting

Welcome to the third 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 - Senior Prescribing & Governance 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



Are you storing your fridge medicines correctly?

Poor fridge temperature monitoring is one area that is consistently being highlighted by community pharmacies at their safe storage and administration of medicines advisory visits to care homes

It is every care homes responsibility to ensure that residents always receive medicines that are of good quality. Medicines that are not stored at the correct temperature may not work effectively or be unsafe to use.

Important points to remember:

- Ensure any fridge used for the storage of medicines is lockable
- Ensure the fridge temperature is between 2 and 8°C. Fridge temperatures should be monitored once a day using a minimum/maximum thermometer and these temperatures along with the

actual running temperature should be recorded in a designated book.

- Always remember to reset the thermometer after the temperatures have been recorded
- It is good practice to have a written policy of what to do if temperatures go above or below the acceptable range. In these cases medicines should be moved to another fridge and the pharmacy contacted to advise as to whether the medicines are fit for use.
- Ensure the fridge is cleaned and defrosted at least once a month and this is recorded with the daily temperature readings.



Should you be witnessing the administration of Controlled Drugs (CD's)?

- Administration of CD's should be by nurses/care workers who have been trained and designated to do so.
- Administration should be witnessed by another trained and designated member of staff. Witnessing staff need to understand what they are checking and why they are checking it.
- In all cases it is good practice to have a witness to check the resident name, time given, dose and drug
- The nurse/carer and witness should also witness the patient taking the medication and they should then both sign the MAR chart
- The remaining balance should be checked with the register and then initialled by both the nurse/carer and the witness

Ensure staff have had the correct training

Disposal of Medicines

Care homes should ensure that any unwanted or expired medicines are stored appropriately while awaiting collection from either the community pharmacy (residential) or waste management company (nursing). Medicines should:

- Be stored separately from medicines that are in use
- Be securely locked away (this includes any medication disposal bins provided by the waste management company)
- Be recorded in a designated book and include what and how much is being disposed of (controlled drugs should also be recorded in the CD register).

In all cases medicines should be returned for disposal as soon as possible



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/handlingmedsocalcare.pdf

Handwritten MAR Chart Entries

Ideally all medicines on a MAR chart should be printed but if a handwritten entry is the only option due to a change in medicines mid month there must be a robust system in place to ensure the MAR chart is correct before it is used to administer medicines.

Poor records are a potential cause of preventable medication errors. Handwritten entries on MAR charts increase the risk of medicine errors due to incorrectly transcribing the details from another document and handwriting that is difficult to read and potentially misunderstood.

Good practice for handwritten entries in MAR charts is to:

- Ensure new directions are written legibly in ink
- If GP/prescriber are unable to sign MAR chart ensure a copy of prescription/letter/fax is kept with the MAR chart
- Include the name of the doctor/prescriber who gave the new instructions
- Include date of entry, your name and signature
- Ensure a second person checks (either verbally or from written information) the entry and countersigns
- Ensure no dosage is written 'as directed' - always clarify with the residents GP

Bisphosphonate Administration

Please ensure all residents prescribed bisphosphonates are receiving them appropriately as per the medicines BNF instructions. Failure to do this may mean the medicines don't work as effectively as they should.

For example Alendronic Acid....

Tablets should be swallowed whole with plenty of water while sitting or standing; to be taken on an empty stomach at least 30 minutes before breakfast (or another oral medicine); patient should stand or sit upright for at least 30 minutes after taking tablet (BNF)

Systems should be put into place to accommodate these requirements which may include giving these medicines earlier than the other morning medicines.

Safeguarding Adults Information

All care homes can obtain information and advice regarding safeguarding issues from the Safeguarding Adults Practice team on **01623 434747** or by visiting www.safeguardingadultsnotts.org to view policies & procedures, multi-agency training dates & other useful related information

To make a safeguarding referral please call **08449 808080**.

The Quality Monitoring Officers have recently moved bases and now cover particular areas. If you would like to discuss any quality monitoring issues please contact:

Tracy Johnson - Quality Monitoring Officer (north care homes) - 07827 980722

Amanda Jones - Quality Monitoring Officer (south care homes) - 07500 034001