



Hertfordshire and
West Essex Integrated
Care System

Good Practice Guidance Medication Waste Reduction

11th December 2023

Ceris Nash

**Working together
for a healthier future**



Learning Objectives

- Ordering, storage and disposal of medication
- Ordering cycles
- Mid-cycle requests
- Regular and PRN medication requests
- Appropriate expiry dates
- Administration tips to reduce waste



How much does your
monthly medication waste
add up to?



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Introduction

Approximately £50 million worth of NHS supplied medicines are disposed of every year by care homes (2010)

Prevention of waste can be done by addressing the following areas:

- Ordering of medication
- Administration of medication
- Appropriate waste management



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Ordering of Medication

- The care home should retain responsibility for ordering medication; this shouldn't be delegated to the community pharmacist.
- Care home providers should ensure that at least 2 members of care home staff have the training and skills to order medication.
- It is important that the member(s) of staff responsible for ordering medications **only requests items that are needed after checking the stock. Do not routinely clear medicine stocks at the end of the month only to re-order new stock.**
- Ensure any medicines that have been discontinued are not re-ordered. Inform the community pharmacy of any discontinued medications. **Normally once the medication has left the pharmacy it cannot be reused.**
- Normally unused medicines which have been prescribed for a resident cannot be re-used for another resident.



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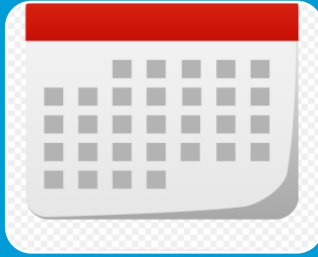


Regular Medicines

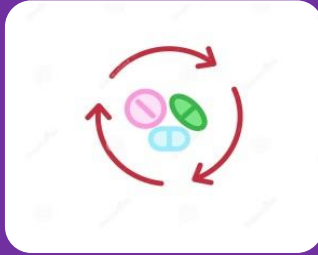
- Liaise with the prescriber if there are medications that are dispensed in original packs of 30 days rather than 28.
- If a regular medication is not routinely being taken as prescribed due to refusal/ non-adherence, request prescriber to review.
- Medications such as inhalers, insulin, GTN spray and glucagon should be carried forward and not re-ordered each month if not needed. When carrying forward, **always check the expiry date on the packaging.**



Mid-Cycle Requests



Ensure any new medication started are synchronised with the current cycle, e.g. if a new regular medication is started on day 13, then 15 days' supply should be requested, so it's in line with current cycle.



When any medication changes are made, suggest implementing the change on the next cycle rather than during a cycle, if the change is not urgent.



Ensure that any changes are communicated with the pharmacy.



When required (PRN) Medicines

- ✓ When required (PRN) medications should be carried forward onto the next MAR chart each month. Record the quantity carried forward on the new MAR chart.
- ✓ NICE recommends that all 'when required' medications are kept in original packaging.
- ✓ Medications in original packaging may be retained until the manufacturer's expiry date.
- ✓ GP review of 'when required' medications should be prompted if continually refused.
- ✓ If a resident is using a PRN medication regularly, discuss this with the GP. It may be appropriate to alter the medication/dose.



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Others

Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS)

- HWEICB [care-home-managing-malnutrition-pathway \(icb.nhs.uk\)](https://www.icb.nhs.uk/care-home-managing-malnutrition-pathway) Will help determine if/when ONS is appropriate
- Consider [homemade-supplements \(icb.nhs.uk\)](https://www.icb.nhs.uk/homemade-supplements) as a viable alternative to ONS
- ONS should be given between meals.
- Check the resident preferences of the flavour/consistency/finishes off product
- Review monthly to ensure ONS is still needed.

Dressings & Catheters

- Before ordering a prescription, ensure that a prescription has not already been requested for the same dressing by another healthcare professional.
- Request the exact number of dressings required.
- Dressings should not be routinely ordered in monthly quantities.
- Store dressings in a central location.



Administration of Medication

Do

- ✓ Record the 'date opened' on all liquids, creams and ointments.
- ✓ If you notice that there is a lot of excess at the end of the month, please ask GPs to review the quantity prescribed as it might be possible to change to a smaller pack size, e.g. generally only a fingertip amount of barrier cream is required when it is used; therefore, a smaller pack size may be more suitable.
- ✓ Ensure the storage areas are kept clean and tidy and the temperature of the room is maintained below 25°C.
- ✓ Monitor the fridge daily and ensure it is regularly cleaned and defrosted in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. The fridge temperature should be maintained between 2°C and 8°C. Ensure thermometers are reset after each reading to ensure accurate recording of temperatures.
- ✓ Audit the waste records, these may provide useful information on how efficiently medicines are being managed in the care home.

Do not

- ✗ Do not prepare medication for administration until you have identified the resident's willingness or ability to take the medication.



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Tablets/Capsules/Liquid Preparation

FORMULATION	EXPIRY DETAILS	COMMENTS
Tablets & capsules - <i>stored in manufacturer's original packaging</i>	Foil strips: Manufacturer's expiry Bottles: Manufacturer's expiry - some products may have a shorter expiry after opening	Medicines kept for use in the next cycle should be recorded in the 'carried forward' section of MAR chart
Tablets & capsules - <i>decanted from original packaging into bottles by pharmacy</i>	6 months from dispensing date unless otherwise specified	Medicines kept for use in the next cycle should be recorded in the 'carried forward' section of MAR chart
Tablets & capsules - <i>stored in Multi-Compartment Compliance Aid</i>	8 weeks from dispensing date	
Oral liquids - <i>stored in original container</i>	6 months from date of opening <u>or</u> manufacturer's recommendation if shorter	Write DATE of opening on dispensing label. Medicines kept for use in the next cycle should be recorded in the 'carried forward' section of MAR chart



Other preparations

FORMULATION	EXPIRY DETAILS	COMMENTS
External liquids	6 months from date of opening <u>or</u> manufacturer's recommendation if shorter	Write DATE of opening on dispensing label
Emollients - in pump dispensers/tubs/jars/tubes	3 months from date of opening <u>or</u> manufacturer's recommendation if shorter	All emollients should be for named residents. Write DATE of opening on dispensing label
Eye/ear/nose drops or ointments	1 month from date of opening <u>or</u> manufacturer's recommendation if shorter	Write DATE of opening on dispensing label on bottle/tube
Nasal sprays	3 months from date of opening <u>or</u> manufacturer's recommendation if shorter	Write DATE of opening on dispensing label on bottle
Inhalers	Manufacturer's expiry	
Insulin	Unopened stored in fridge: Manufacturer's expiry Opened stored at room temperature: 4 weeks	Write DATE of opening on pen/cartridge. One pen/cartridge will often be sufficient for 1 month



Storage and Disposal of Waste

CQC guidance on [Storing medicines in residential services](#) states: *Store medicines for disposal in a tamper-proof container. Control access to the container, until it is collected or taken to the pharmacy*

Care homes without nursing

You should dispose of medicines by returning them to the supplier. This would usually be a community pharmacy or dispensing doctor. The supplier should dispose of the medicines in line with current waste regulations.

Nursing homes

You must only return medicines to a licensed waste disposal company. This might include community pharmacies.



Recording of Waste for disposal

Auditing of waste can help identify common causes of waste. It should be recorded in the waste disposal/returns book as follows

- Date of disposal or return to the pharmacy
- Name and strength of medicines
- Quantity
- Residents name
- Reason for disposal
- Signature of staff disposing of medication
- Signature of the person collecting medicines for disposal



Disposal of medicines on site through the sewage system is not appropriate.



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Quiz Questions

1. Approximately how much NHS supplied medication is disposed of by care homes every year?

- A. £20 million
- B. £30 million
- C. £40 million
- D. £50 million



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2. What happens to PRN medication left over at the end of your cycle?

- A. Keep for use by staff
- B. Move over into Homely Remedies stock
- C. Carry over to the next cycle
- D. Dispose of and re-order for next cycle



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3. What temperature should your medication fridge be kept at?

- A. A steady 5 degrees
- B. Between 2 and 8 degrees
- C. Under 25 degrees
- D. Between 5 and 12 degrees



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4. How long after opening does an emollient in a tub have to be disposed of?

- A. 3 months
- B. 1 week
- C. 1 month
- D. The manufactures expiry



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How much does your monthly medication waste add up to?

Full box = £1200
Half box = £600

Over 12 months = £14,400
£7,200



Approx 16,500 care homes in the U.K



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Further Resources

1) PrescQIPP Medicines use in care homes e-learning package

An e-learning package on medicines use in care homes is available for care home staff and covers a range of areas including some of those highlighted above. The e-learning package is endorsed by NICE and supports the implementation of recommendations in the NICE guideline on managing medicines in care homes. The package is available via <https://www.prescqipp.info/>. Details for registering will be provided to the care home manager/s.

2) NICE Guidelines for Managing Medicines in care homes

This guideline covers good practice for managing medicines in care homes. It aims to promote the safe and effective use of medicines in care homes by advising on processes for prescribing, handling and administering medicines. It also recommends how care and services relating to medicines should be provided to people living in care homes.

[1 Recommendations | Managing medicines in care homes | Guidance | NICE](#)

3) CQC medicines guidance

CQC have developed guidance on various topics relating to medicines use within care homes. The guidance can be found via the following website <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/medicines-information-adult-social-care-services>.



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How to contact us:

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Any Questions?



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