

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Refers to the safe handling, support, and monitoring of medicines to ensure residents receive the correct medication, at the correct time, in the correct way, while minimising risk and promoting wellbeing.

This guide is for health care assistants with medicine management competency training.

Alert

What to watch for:

- Missed or late medicines, or if someone chooses not to take them
- Changes in how the person feels after taking medicine
- Signs of a possible adverse (bad) reaction. For example, rash, sleepiness, confusion, feeling sick or vomiting
- Wrong labels, packaging or paperwork
- Medicines left out where others can get them
- Low medicine stock (tell staff before it runs out)
- Taking medicine the wrong way. For example, crushing or chewing tablets that should be swallowed whole, mixing medicines into food or drink without approval

What to do right away:

- Report medication errors or near misses immediately to the registered nurse or senior staff
- Tell the nurse or senior staff immediately
- Write down missed doses or mistakes
- Keep checking on how the resident is feeling
- Report any bad reactions straight away
- Complete an incident form as per facility policy





Acute changes that require immediate action

- Rash or itching
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Swelling
- Decreased level of consciousness
- Shortness of breath

Watch for changes

- Difficulty swallowing
- Coughing or shortness of breath
- Sleepiness
- Movement or balance, eg, dizziness
- Changes in eating and drinking patterns
- Mood or changed behaviours, eg, agitation, restlessness
- Bowel habits, eg, constipation, diarrhoea
- More confused (query delirium)
- Pain

Medications are taken properly

- Taken the right way at the right time
- If resident refuses medication, alert the registered nurse
- Check medication is not spat out or hidden
- Do not crush, split, hide, or mix medication with food or drink unless specifically authorised and documented

Why a resident may not take their medicine

- Pain
- Feeling worried or upset
- Feeling sick or nauseous
- Confusion
- Cultural or personal beliefs
- Trouble understanding or communicating

Alert the registered nurse if medication is taken incorrectly or not taken



- Changes from normal behaviour
- More confused, sleepy or withdrawn
- New side effects like dizziness or falls
- Missed or wrong doses
- Risk of giving the wrong medicine. Take it seriously and do not rely on the registered nurse to have it correct

ACTION

- Follow a resident's care plan and workplace rules
- Always follow facility medication management policy, incident reporting procedures, and clinical escalation pathways, eg, Stop and Watch early warning tool or the Deterioration Early Warning System (DEWS)
- Work within your role. Do not make clinical decisions about medicines
- Only assist with medicines if you have completed medication competency training and are working within your delegated role

When to get urgent help

- Rash, swelling or trouble breathing
- Choking
- Collapse or sudden worsening

Follow the facility emergency response process and seek immediate help from registered nurse

Safe practice

- Right person
- Right medicine
- Right time
- Right method of delivery
- Never leave medicines unattended
- If unsure, stop and ask a registered nurse



REPORT

Notify registered nurse immediately of:

- any concerns about safety or medicines
- missed or refused medicines
- side effects
- medicines not working
- changes in a resident's condition



Record observations clearly

- Write as soon as possible
- Keep it clear and factual. Only write what you see and hear
- Include what happened and who was told

Record

- When medicine is refused or missed
- PRN medication given (as needed). State the reason for administration and if the medication was effective
- Any side effects or changes
- Errors or near misses on the correct form
- Share any important updates clearly at handover

