

Safe Medication Practice

Course introduction

As a professional you have a 'duty of care' to ensure that the individuals you support take their medication safely.

Medication is a mandatory training course that should be completed before supporting anyone with safe administration of medication in a care setting and should be supported with a competency assessment by your employer.

Learning Aims for this training.

- To learn the rules and regulations that govern medication practice.
- Learn Types of medicines
- Routes of administration
- Safe practices
- Adverse reactions and potential side effects
- Recording and reporting
- Errors in medication

Your Training

This course is divided into 7 learning modules:

1. The rules & regulations
2. A person centred approach to safe administration
3. Medicine Types & routes of safe administration
4. Safe Practice
5. Adverse reaction and side effects
6. Record keeping
7. Dealing with Errors

Safe Medication Practice

Module 1 The rules & regulations

Legislation has been developed to keep people safe.

It is the responsibility of all care providers to apply the highest standards of safety to medication management.

Legislation and regulations that govern medication management include:

- The Medicines Act 1968.
- The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- The Misuse of Drugs (Safe Custody) Regulations 1973.
- Human Medicines Regulations 2012.
- Care Standards Act 2000.
- Care Act 2014.
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Your employer will have its own policies and procedures in relation to medication and you must make sure you follow these to comply with the law and keep everyone safe from harm.

As legislation on medication and related tasks is forever changing, you need to keep yourself up to date with current laws and current guidance from your employer.

End of module 1

Module 2 - A Person-Centred Approach to safe administration

When an individual has capacity to make their own decisions, they should be offered the choice to manage their own medication.

However, if the assessment and review process indicate that refusal of medication is not safe and puts their health at risk then this matter should be consulted with other professionals to implement safe procedures.

Its important to know that Individuals you support have the right to refuse medication. You should follow your organisations procedures and the service users care plan for dealing with refusals.

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Self-Administration

This means that the individual can take their own medication without them or others being at risk.

If the individual is self-administering with their medication, then they may still need minimal support, such as prompting when the medication is due, which should be detailed in their Care Plan.

Support is minimal when an individual can self-administer.

When prompting or assisting with medication you should not take any medication out of its packaging.

If you support an individual with their medication by prompting or assisting them, then your actions must still be recorded, so that there is evidence that it has happened.

Safe Administration support

This means that the individual is not able to self-administer their medication and therefore need full support. This also means you will dispense the medication by taking it out of its packaging and then pass it to the individual to take.

You should make sure the medication has been taken and then document on the Medication administration record. (MAR)

Administration by Specialised Techniques:

- These administration techniques need specialised training and can include:
- Administration via a PEG (Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy)
- Buccal administration (inside the mouth)

End of module 2

Module 3 Medication Types & routes of safe administration

Medicine Types

Antibiotics - Antibiotics are used to treat or prevent some types of bacterial infection. They work by killing bacteria or preventing them from spreading.

Analgesics - A medicine that relieves pain without putting a person to sleep or making them lose consciousness. Common analgesic: Paracetamol

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Antihistamines - These are medicines used to relieve symptoms of allergies, for example, hay fever, hives or reactions to bites or stings.

Antacids - An antacid is a substance which neutralizes stomach acidity and is used to relieve heartburn, indigestion, or an upset stomach.

Anticoagulants - These medicines work by interrupting the process where blood clots form and are referred to as 'blood thinners'.

Antipsychotics - These are medicines used to treat psychiatric illness such as: Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder

Diuretics - Used to get rid of excess fluids in the body and are often called water or fluid pills. They increase the amount of urine produced, and urination is the body's way of removing excess salt and water.

Laxatives - Medicines used to alleviate constipation that soften or loosen the stool while others increase how frequently the large colon contracts, helping the stool move along the bowel

Hormones - Hormones are substances normally produced and secreted by various glands in the body. They act to stimulate and regulate body functions.

Cytotoxic - These are powerful medicines that are used to stop cell division which cause the cells to die. They are commonly used to treat Cancer cells. Chemotherapy is a treatment using cytotoxic medicines.

Statins - These are a group of medicines that help to lower cholesterol in the blood. They are used to treat conditions like:

Coronary Heart Disease

Angina

Heart Attacks

Stroke

Routes of Administration

Ingestion

This is medication taken orally and swallowed via the mouth and includes:

Tablets

Capsules

Lozenges, Pastilles

Liquids

Inhalation

This is medicine that is inhaled through the nose or mouth and commonly used for the treatment of Asthma and other respiratory conditions.

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An inhaler is a medical device that delivers medication through the mouth into the body via the lungs. A measured dose of a medicine is inhaled in a fine spray.

Commonly used for:

- Asthma
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Nebulisers work in the same way as an inhaler but are easier to use if the individual finds it difficult to use an inhaler.

Topical Medicines

These are medicines that are applied externally on the skin, usually to treat a skin condition or sometimes to treat pain.

They are in the form of creams or lotions.

Transdermal Patches

Transdermal means across the skin and the patch is applied to an area of the body so that the medicine is absorbed into the bloodstream.

Instillation

Drops, sprays or ointments administered through the nose, ears, or eyes, and because medicine is directly put into an individual's body, you should have practical training before administering.

Injection

This is where the skin is pierced with a needle which administers a measured dosage of medicine via a syringe. Some medicines come in pre-drawn syringes.

Most injections must be administered by a qualified healthcare professional.

Infusion

Medicine administered into the bloodstream via a drip or a pump, managed by healthcare professionals.

Infusion medicines are administered at a slow constant rate, where a concentrated dose would put an individual at risk or be life threatening.

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PRN Medicines

PRN is the Latin term 'Pro Re Nata' which means 'when required'. This is prescribed medication, but administration must be monitored closely to avoid risk of overdose.

When an individual requires PRN medicine, the administration must be recorded and documented on the MAR chart.

Painkillers are common PRN prescribed medicine.

Controlled drugs

A controlled drug is a prescription medicine that is subject to strict legal controls. These controls are to prevent it from being misused, being obtained illegally, or causing harm.

End of module 3

Module 4 - Safe Practice

It is important that you prepare for medication administration with attention to health and safety, ensuring that the individual will take their medication safely.

Your organisation should have their own policy for the safe administration of controlled drugs.

Staff administering medicines including controlled drugs must be trained and assessed as competent to do so.

The 7 rights of administration:

- Right person.
- Right medication.
- Right dose.
- Right route.
- Right time.
- Right documentation.
- Right to refuse.

Administration checklist

- Hands washed.
- Consent of the service user
- All medications are to hand.
- Do you have the right PPE?
- Medication Administration Records

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Once you are fully prepared, you can then follow the correct procedure and administer medication to the individual.

Storage of Medicines

Safe storage must be provided for medicines with only authorised and trained staff having access.

Storage should be a locked cupboard or cabinet in a secure area of the workplace.

Refrigerated Medicines

Some medicines must be stored at specific temperatures, and if there is need for storage in a refrigerator then security measures must still be upheld.

The temperature of the fridge should be taken daily and recorded.

The temperature must be between 2-8°C.

Expiry Dates

It's important that all medication is checked before administering to anyone, Medication that has expired must not be given and should be safely removed. Consuming out of date medication is dangerous and must never be administered.

Covert administration is when medicines are administered in a disguised format.

Medicines could be hidden in food, drink or given through a feeding tube without the knowledge or consent of the person receiving them. This means the person does not know they are taking a medicine. When a person has mental capacity to make the decision about whether to take a medicine, they have the right to refuse that medicine. They have this right, even if that refusal appears ill-judged to staff or family members who are caring for them.

Observation

Once you are trained and passed as competent in the administration of medication then the next step is to be observed in practice.

To ensure that you are supported fully and continue to deliver the correct medication support you will periodically be observed in your practice. Each organisation will have a procedure to follow.

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Disposal and Returns

All care settings should have a written policy for the safe disposal of surplus, unwanted or expired medicines. You should record the process for disposing of medicines correctly, you must Store medicines for disposal securely and separately to in use medicines. Do not dispose of medicines on site through the sewage system or in general waste bins.

Module 5 Adverse reactions and side effects

Adverse Reaction

are unwanted effects that are possibly related to a drug. Side effects can vary from minor problems to life-threatening events, such as a heart attack or liver damage.

Side Effects

These are still reactions to medicines but can be relatively minor and not interfere with the individual's health.

Side effects can include:

- Rashes
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Shaking
- Headaches
- Drowsiness

All symptoms must be recorded and monitored and if they are severe and persist then medical advice must be sought.

Allergies

A drug allergy is the abnormal reaction of your immune system to a medication.

The most common signs and symptoms of drug allergy are hives, rash, or fever. A drug allergy may cause serious reactions, including a life-threatening condition that affects multiple body systems (anaphylaxis).

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Drug allergy signs and symptoms may include:

- Skin rash
- Hives
- Itching
- Fever
- Swelling
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Runny nose
- Itchy, watery eyes

When side effects or allergies are severe you must call for help from the emergency services

End of module 4

Module 6 – Record keeping.

The most important thing after supporting an individual with medication is to record your practice and evidence what support you have given.

All medication administration must be recorded on a MAR (Medication Administration Record).

If the MAR is not completed correctly then this can result in an error and a safeguarding alert.

If you make a mistake on the MAR, You should put a line through it, correct and sign. The MAR should be completed in BLACK ink.

Example of a MAR chart

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Medication Details	Time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	

You must ensure that the MAR is signed, immediately after you have administered to the individual and witnessed them taking their medication.

Remember....if you're not sure STOP!

Signing for Controlled Drugs

Ensure records of administration for controlled drugs include the following:

- name of the person having the dose administered.
- date and time of the dose
- name, formulation, and strength of the controlled drug administered.
- dose of the controlled drug administered.
- name and signature or initials of the person who administered the dose.
- name and signature or initials of any witness to administration.

Handover

A handover is the transfer of responsibility and accountability to a staff member taking over from another staff member for all aspects of care for the service users.

Examples of medication handover information include:

1. Medication refusals
2. PRN that has been taken
3. Changes in medication
4. Potential reactions
5. Hospital admissions
6. Information shared with others
7. Medication reviews

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Medication Reviews

Every individual that has medication support should have an annual medication review to ensure that the needs of their health and wellbeing are met.

Module 7 - Dealing with Errors

Medication errors are very serious and can have dangerous consequences if not addressed immediately.

The safe and secure handling of medicines is the responsibility of every health and social care professional, who must ensure that they work within their professional guidelines.

Evidencing Practice

One of the most common reasons for medication error is when the MAR has not been signed.

It is essential that the MAR is signed and everyone looking at the record can see evidence that the medication has been administered.

You should never sign for other staff members each person is responsible for signing the MAR chart, if you spot an error where the MAR is not signed, then you must raise the matter as this is classed as a medication error and must be investigated.

Safeguarding

Is your duty to report any errors, including 'near misses'.

Your report should be in writing, as this may be the start of an investigation.

The report must be:

- Clear and legible
- Accurate
- Factual
- Correct date/time
- Signed

Errors in medication administration can be fatal!

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If you're unsure STOP and ask for help!

End of module 7

Well done!

You have now completed the theory and knowledge assessment part of this training. As mentioned in module 4 your practice should be observed practically and confirmed as competent the administer medication safely.