

A Guide To Safe Administration of Medicines from Original Packs for Care Homes and Domiciliary Care Agencies during COVID-19

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Salford Royal's Pharmacy Department have been required to implement our business recovery plan due to additional services required within the Trust and the number of staff absences from work.

As a result, you may now receive medicines in original packs (boxes and bottles), rather than blister packs on discharge from hospital to administer from.

To ensure you are aware of how to safely administer medicines this way, it is essential that ALL staff who administer medicines have read and understood this information sheet.

What is the difference between administering medicines from original packs compared to blister packs?

You may have got into the habit of simply selecting the medicine from the appropriate section of the blister pack when you were administering from the MDS (monitored dosage system) without fully reading all the important details.

It will now be a case of using best practice EVERY time you administer. This means you MUST read the label very carefully for each medicine and check each detail on the label against the information on the MAR sheet. The details MUST agree before you can administer the medicine.

In addition, when you administer tablets from a manufacturer's original pack, make sure you take the strip of tablets out of the box, check the back of the strip to make sure the name of the medicine printed on it corresponds with the name of the medicine on the label before removing the tablet into a medicine pot to administer.

How should I store the medicines?

It is best if medicines for a particular resident are all stored together.

TIP: Often care homes use separate containers to store each person's medicines in. This keeps all the medicines for one person together. These must then be locked away.

TIP: Make sure any medicines that need cold storage are placed in the medicines fridge and any Controlled Drugs (CDs) are locked in the Controlled Drug cupboard and a record made in the CD register.

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How should I administer medicines?

To make sure no medicines are forgotten, it is best to administer the medicines in the order they appear on the MAR sheet. If you work down the MAR sheet in a systematic order, you will be less likely to make a mistake.

TIP: Be aware there may be more than one MAR sheet for each person.

TIP: Always follow the correct procedure and remember to double check the medicine label against the MAR sheet paying particular attention to the 6 Rights -i.e. you are giving the right person, the right medicine, at the right dose, at the right time, using the right route and bearing in mind the person has the right to refuse.

What are the areas of risk?

There are many areas of risk with administering medicines. Here are a few of the common ones:

- When you administer tablets from a manufacturer's original tablet strip, make sure you take the strip of tablets out of the box, check the back of the strip to make sure the name of the medicine printed on it corresponds with the name of the medicine on the label, pop out the tablet into a medicine pot and then replace the strip back into the box straight away.
- You must make sure you only administer one medicine at a time and replace the strip of medicines back into the box immediately. This will reduce the likelihood of you replacing the wrong strip of medicines into the wrong box.
- When you pop tablets or capsules out of a manufacturer's original pack, select the tablet in a consecutive order (i.e. use the pack as if it were a day marked pack) and not just randomly. This will ensure you don't get left with all sorts of odd tablets in amongst the empty popped blister strips and will make auditing much easier and will reduce the likelihood of error.
- Where medicines have been dispensed by the pharmacy into plain tablet boxes, you must be particularly careful to avoid error.

TIP: Only administer one medicine at a time.

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- Be careful of medicines that have the same name but different strengths e.g. medicines for Parkinson's or epilepsy -often people might be taking a combination of different strengths at different times of day.

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Will it take longer to administer medicines using original packs?

Yes, to start with, as you need to get used to checking every single detail on the label against the MAR sheet for each medicine, one point at a time. Like most things, the process will speed up as you get used to doing it. There are no short cuts.

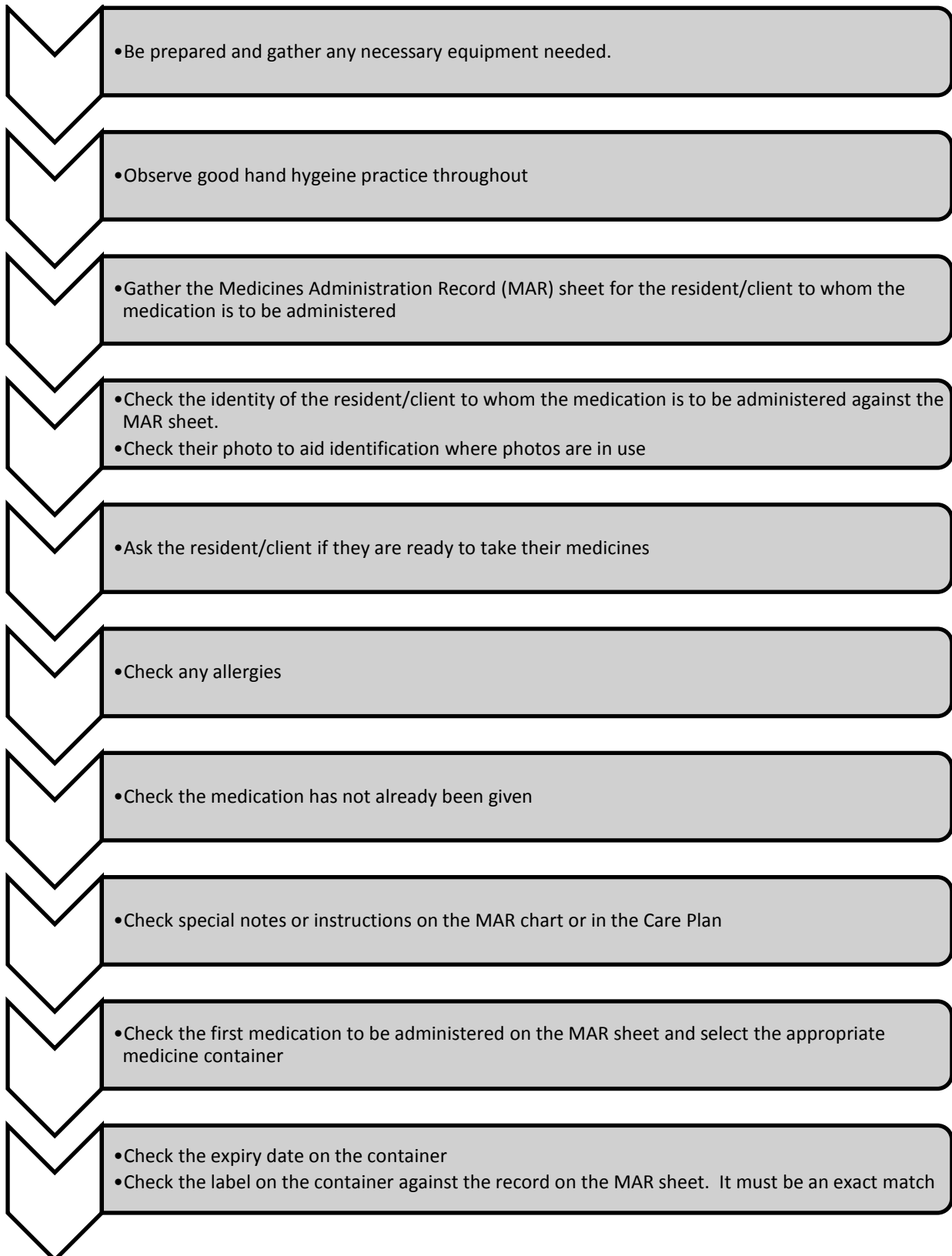
REMEMBER- Make sure staff are fully trained and have been assessed as competent before they administer medicines.

The information in this leaflet does not cover all aspects of medicines handling and is to be used as a guide and in addition to local policies and procedures.

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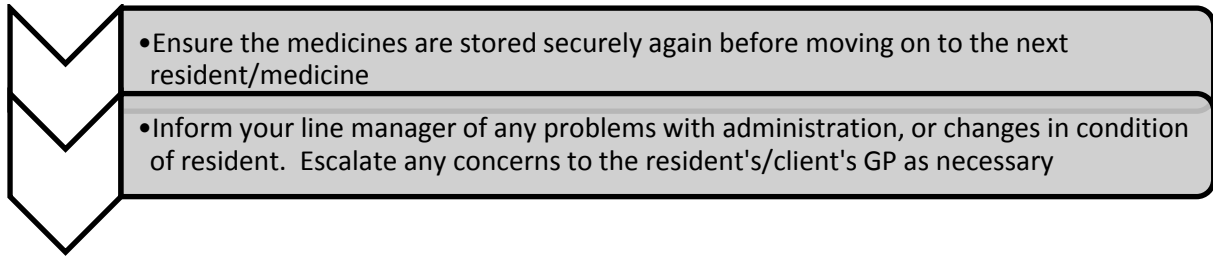
Procedure for the Administration of Medicines from Original Packs



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- Labels - check the name on the medicines and the resident/client is on the label. Also check the form of the medicines (e.g. tablet, syrup) is on the label. Check the strength, dose and frequency of the medicine is on the label. Check any special dosing instructions e.g. dissolve in water is on the label.
- Where the medicine is in a manufacturer's strip within a box, ensure the strip matches the label (medicine name and strength of tablet/capsule)
- Remove the appropriate dose of medicine from the container and place in a clean medicine pot (one medicine pot per resident/client - do not reuse the pot for a different resident /client)
- Take the medicine to be administered to the resident/client
- Ensure the resident/client is in an upright position
- Administer the medicine according to the dosage form. Offer a drink with oral medicines
- Witness the resident/client taking the medicine
- Record administration of the medicines IMMEDIATELY on the MAR sheet
- If the medicine is not administered for any reason (e.g. refusal), then annotate the MAR sheet using the appropriate code and document any additional information
- An individual dose of medication removed from the container and subsequently not administered must be disposed of safely. It must not be returned to the container – with the exception of a remaining half of tablet to be used for the next dose.

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- Ensure the medicines are stored securely again before moving on to the next resident/medicine
 - Inform your line manager of any problems with administration, or changes in condition of resident. Escalate any concerns to the resident's/client's GP as necessary

Adapted from Opus training

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