

Medication Awareness Handout

What are medicines?

Medicine:

1. Any substance used to treat or prevent disease or illness, esp. taken internally.
2. The science or practice of treating or preventing illness esp. using prepared substances rather than surgery.

Aims of Medication Administration:

To improve and prolong the quality of life

To alleviate symptoms

To prevent symptoms altogether

Aims of Medication Training

This is to ensure that the

RIGHT PERSON receives the

RIGHT MEDICATION at the

RIGHT TIME in the

RIGHT AMOUNT

RIGHT ROUTE

Classification of Medication

- Controlled Drugs (CD)
- Prescription Only Medicines (POM)
- Over the Counter - "*Pharmacist Present*"
- Over the Counter – "*General Sales List*"
- Homely Remedies

Medication Policy

The policy will cover such things as-;

Receipt & Storage of Medicines	Actual Administration
Disposal & Returns of medication	Medication Tracking
Obtaining Consent & Dealing with Errors	Relevant Documentation to be Complete

How Medicines Work

Even with today's increased knowledge scientists are still unable to say exactly how all drugs work, however, loosely speaking effects can be split into three main categories;

1. ***Replacing substances that are deficient or missing in the body,***
2. ***Altering the activity of cells, or***
3. ***Destroying infectious micro-organisms or abnormal cells***

Types of Medication

- **Antibiotics** – *to fight infection*
- **Analgesics** – *to relieve pain*
- **Anti Histamines** – *to relieve allergy symptoms*
- **Antacids** – *for indigestion*
- **Anti Coagulants** – *to prevent blood clots*
- **Psychotropic Medicines** – *interacts with the nervous system (used to treat depression)*
- **Diuretics** – *used to get rid of excess fluids*
- **Laxatives** – *to alleviate constipation*
- **Hormones** – *steroids or insulin HRT, The Pill*
- **Cytotoxic Medicines** – *to treat some forms of cancer*

Side Effects of Medication

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| • Rashes | Stiffness |
| • Shaking | Headaches |
| • Drowsiness | Constipation |
| • Weight gain | Breathing Difficulties |
| • Swellings | Nausea |

- Vomiting

Diarrhoea

Covert Medication

Generally medication should never be hidden in food or drink.

In rare circumstances, it is found to be necessary for the benefit of the client.

After a consultation agreement with GP, advocates, family and care home , a “Covert Policy” will be drawn up and must be followed.

This is the only occasion where it will be acceptable

Taking two or more different medicines (*polypharmacy*)

The more medicines a person has to take the greater the likelihood of a reaction between them.

Occasionally these reactions can be beneficial and the doctor may prescribe medicines which complement each other; often, however, the reactions between different drugs can have a negative effect on the patient’s well being.

Regular reviews are undertaken to monitor medication.

Storage of Controlled Drugs

These must be stored within a “locked metal cupboard” which is inside another locked cupboard.

This ensures safety & restricted access

Prevents misuse and accidental use

Separate keys should be held by a designated worker. These keys should be held on their person at all times

A clear controlled drugs register must be kept in addition to the MAR sheet

Contraindications

A contraindication is a specific situation in which a drug, procedure, or surgery should NOT be used, because it may be harmful to the patient.

There are two types of contraindications:

- Relative contraindication means that caution should be used when two drugs or procedures are used together. (It is acceptable to do so if the benefits outweigh the risk.)
- Absolute contraindication means that it could result in a life-threatening situation. A procedure or medication that falls under this category should be avoided.

Allergies

Allergic reaction is an uncommon and unwanted side effect of medication.

Several different types of allergic reactions to medications can occur.

Reactions to drugs range from a mild localized rash to serious effects on vital systems.

The body's response can affect many organ systems, but the skin is the organ most frequently involved.

It is important to recognize the symptoms of a drug allergy, because they can be life-threatening. Death from an allergic reaction to a medication is extremely rare.

An allergic reaction does not often happen the first time you take a medication.

A reaction is much more likely to occur the next time you take that medication.

If you have a reaction the first time, you probably were exposed to the medication before without being aware of it.

Overdose

Overdoses of drugs or chemicals can be either accidental or intentional.

Drug overdoses occur when a person takes more than the medically recommended dose.

However, some people may be more sensitive to certain medications so that the high end of the therapeutic range of a drug may be toxic for them.

Hygiene Precautions

As most medications are orally, the carer must observe all hygiene rules as if it were food.

Hands should be washed before & after medicine administration.

Where relevant wear disposable gloves in case you cannot avoid touching the medication.

Refusal

Some clients may refuse their medicine.

They have the right to do this and they cannot be forced to take them.

This should be recorded on the MAR sheet, care plan or verbally to the manager or supervisor.

Checking Medication against the MAR Chart

Check name of the service user.

Check medication, type, quantity and dosage instructions.

Note down any changes and medication given on the MAR sheet.

Use medicine pots hygienically.

Never remove medicines from the original packaging.

All medicines should be issued direct to service users by one authorised carer.

Controlled Drugs Administration

Controlled Drugs must be dealt with by 2 people.

The authorised carer who administers the actual medication to the service user

Another carer who acts as a witness

Both parties must sign the “Controlled Drugs Register”.

This demonstrates that they have been administered in line with the “Medication Policy”

Medication Errors

Six key ways in which staff can help to reduce medication errors:

- Report all ‘near misses’ and medication errors, regardless of whether the patient is harmed, to ensure a learning experience
- Ensure drugs are administered to the correct patient by checking the wristband and highlight antibiotic allergies on the wristband as well as the drug chart
- Check the name and dosage of the medicine to be administered against the prescription
- Do not check medicines and their dosages verbally in tandem with other staff to avoid talking each other through mistakes. Do it separately
- Turn the drug administration into protected time and highlight this by wearing a bright tabard
- Don’t be afraid to question other staff members, however senior, if you suspect something is not correct.

Reporting Mistakes

- Occasionally mistakes can occur during medicine administration.
- It is vital that these mistakes are reported to the supervisor and recorded as necessary.
- Only then, can further advice be sought and appropriate action taken.
- In the case of overdose, the GP may visit.
- A carer should remain with the service user to monitor their condition.

Recording Receipt of Medication

- Date of Receipt.
- Strength and dosage of medicine.
- Quantity Received.
- Service user for whom the medication is prescribed or purchased.
- Signature of member of staff receiving the medication.

Adverse Reactions

- It is important that you report any adverse reactions or suspected reaction to your manager immediately.
- The service users GP or Pharmacist should be notified and consulted before any more of the medication is given