

Safe Medication and Treatment Guidance

Oasis Senior Home Care Ltd and its members do not claim to be experts nor do we offer any clinical advice directly with the administration and handling of medication(s) and drug(s) or any other form of clinical treatments be it a physical intervention or clinical advice. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview on where to seek recognised and reliable sources of information surrounding such provisions.

As a self employed professional who works directly for the service user, you carry the full legal responsibility for your own actions and omissions whilst on placement or during any interaction with the service user in any capacity/format, and so we as Oasis have produced this guide to sign post you to the appropriate channels so you can make an informed decision with any task(s) you carry out to ensure safety at all times when in doubt.

Being responsible and looking after the medication requirements of another individual is a huge undertaking and responsibility and can often be a complex task. This guide is to serve you as the professional caring for the service user to successfully provide assistance for another individual's medication needs.

If in any doubt – ALWAYS seek the advice from a practicing clinician, GP or equivalent or call the '111' line or where in an emergency situation, call – '999' without delay.

KNOWLEDGE

As obvious it may seem, take an active approach to familiarise yourself with the service user's condition and general health. This should give a good understanding of what medication(s) or treatment(s) s/he is receiving and that the prescribed drug(s) are there to treat and in terms of what to expect in ways of any potential side effects that may give rise – This is to ensure you know when to seek expert advice - at the earliest opportunity when something goes wrong.

Medication supplied through the pharmacy or brought over the counter will contain information leaflets specific to that drug(s) – We STRONGLY recommend that you keep these for reference.

Alternatively, there are recognised and official boards where one can obtain supplementary information on medication(s) / Treatment(s) these include:

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-post-registration/standards-for-medicines-management/>

<https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drug/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

<https://patient.info/health>

Guidance on being knowledgeable about medications:

- A) Discuss with the GP about the medication that is being prescribed and make note of it, what is the purpose, and or anticipated side effects. Be mindful of any other tablets that the service user might be currently taking, e.g. Vitamin supplements or other homoeopathic remedies that could interfere with the other medicines that are in use.
- B) Discuss with the pharmacist if there are any specific instructions on how/when the medicine should be taken.
- C) Always keep the written information that accompanies prescriptions safe for future reference. If you intend to decant the medication into a pill dispenser you should also keep the original packaging. In some cases, certain foods may need to be avoided and the pharmacy should advise you of this on the packaging and it will be in the information leaflet which we'd advise you to read.
- D) Ask the pharmacist how the medication should be stored; only ever refrigerate the drug if directed to do so.
- E) Ask the pharmacist and or the GP whether the medicine can be crushed or dissolved- this should only be done under their instruction.
- F) Ask the GP or pharmacist if the drug is addictive or if it's common that people become dependent on it.
- G) You can ask the GP to direct the District Nurse to do a home visit and teach your client about their medication, and how to take it safely.
- H) Be aware of pharmacy opening hours, and what out of hours/emergency provisions they may have in place.

S A F E T Y

Improper use of medications can lead to fatal consequences so safety should always be at the forefront of your mind when dealing with the medication needs of yourself and others.

- A) Ensure that all medication is kept in original containers. If blister packs or dispensers are used, make sure a note is kept describing each pill so that they can be easily identified. The pharmacy may be able to help with this.
- B) Ensure that if easy-open containers are to be used, that these are kept well out of the reach of children who may live in the home, or are likely to visit.
- C) If necessary, ask the pharmacist for large print labels, or keep a magnifying glass near to the medication, so as to ensure that labels can be read with ease. Think about a reminder label on the boxes, reminding them to put on their glasses.
- D) When filling a prescription, check that the name of the drug on the label matches the prescription form before leaving the pharmacy.
- E) Never share medication with others.
- F) Ensure pills are dispensed and taken in a well-lit room. Pills should not be kept near the bed in the event of the wrong medication or a wrong combination being taken by a sleepy person.
- G) Discard all medicines that have expired or that have no labels. This can be done by handing them into any pharmacy for safe destruction. Do not simply flush down the toilet or throw in the bin.
- H) Do not mix alcohol with drugs.
- I) Consult with the GP or pharmacist if over-the-counter remedies are required to ensure that they're not contra-indicated with anything that has been prescribed.
- J) When buying over-the-counter remedies, always check the packaging for signs of tampering. If a seal has been broken or it looks like the box has been opened, give it to the pharmacist and select another.
- K) Discuss any adjustments that may have to be made to keep the person safe, e.g. not standing up too quickly to avoid dizziness etc.
- L) Always check the expiry date on any medication(s).

DILIGENCE

With all the complicated names of medications these days, never mind the variable doses, it is easy to lose track of what should be taken and when. Here are some simple advice to make sure that you do not lose track of anything.

- A) Keep a record of what has been prescribed, when and by whom, in a file. If possible, keep the original packaging and information sheets with this record for ease of reference. When a person goes on holiday or is admitted to hospital, take this file with you, together with the prescribed drugs in case the hospital does not have them to hand in their own pharmacy.
- B) If forgetfulness is a problem, or perhaps there are multiple people involved in the care of your loved one, create a chart that lists the days of the week, the medications prescribed, and the time they are to be taken. Cross off the drug each time it has been taken, or record if and when any medications are missed and what action was taken (e.g. if 111 or the GP was called for advice and what steps were taken).
- C) If a person is admitted to hospital, it's helpful to take any records you have detailing medication in use. This can also include the repeat prescription paperwork if you have it or any handheld records you may have at the home from other health care professionals
- D) Make sure you are aware of any allergies and the effects it has on the care recipient.
- E) Keep a list of drugs on the refrigerator or other equally visible place, and, if necessary, ensure that all family members have an up to date copy of the list in case of an emergency. This could be done electronically and saved onto a mobile phone, or a printed copy could be kept in a wallet or purse.
- F) It is always best to keep your business with one reliable local pharmacy only, as any irregularities in prescriptions can be caught and managed early. Ask about their home delivery services if you think this would be beneficial.

S U M M A R Y

Always follow these 5 KEY principles, when giving medication:

5 R s

Is it the **Right** Person?

Is it the **Right** Time?

Is it the **Right** Medication?

Is it the **Right** Dose?

Is it the **Right** Route?

Then immediately record in the client's notes.