

Care About Medicine

Providing information, support & Guidance on managing medicines safely and effectively in a social care setting

Issue 12 – February 2025

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Movicol® Powder for Oral Solution – Changes to Shelf Life Once Reconstituted

The shelf life of reconstituted Movicol® solution has been reduced from 24 hours to 6 hours. If not drunk straight away it should be covered and stored in the fridge (between 2-8°C) and after 6 hours, it should be discarded. The advice on length of time that reconstituted solution can be kept varies between brands (CosmoCol® – 24 hours, Laxido® - 6 hours). Always check the information leaflet in the box for manufacturers guidance.



Interesting Reading

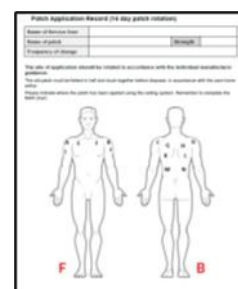
The Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) website has a guidance section on giving medicines with soft food or thickened fluids and offers lots of practical advice and information for service users experiencing swallowing difficulties. The information includes why medicines are given this way i.e. those unable to swallow tablets or thin liquids, how to give medicines this way i.e. choice of food/fluid, interactions and also touches on covert administration and the legal issues surrounding this. The information can be found at:

<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/why-and-how-medicines-are-given-with-soft-food-or-thickened-fluid/>

Remember - any swallowing difficulties should first be discussed with a Health Care Professional (GP, SALT team or pharmacist) involved in the care of the service user.

Rivastigmine Patch Application & Recording

It is important that rivastigmine patches are applied as per the manufacturer's guidance. Patches should not be applied to the same area of skin within a 14-day period. Switching shoulders each time is not appropriate. To help care homes with the application and documenting of this we have devised a specific patch chart. This will be available when we publish our updated guidance document very soon. Watch this space!



Inhaler Expiry Dates

Please be aware of individual manufacturer's guidance relating to the storage and shelf-life of inhalers. Some inhalers are stored in the fridge before their first use and then after the first use are

stored at room temperature and have a shortened expiry from this point. Please ensure that you check the information leaflet that comes with the product for advice on this or contact the pharmacy where it was dispensed for further guidance if unsure.

Electronic MAR Charts (eMARs)

We have had a few providers stating that they have been told that if they are using eMARs that they need to keep a paper MAR chart in the home also. We have looked into this with the local councils, and this is no longer the case. Nottingham City Councils contract was updated last year to reflect that providers can use eMARs **or** paper MARs. Having both versions in use means there is a risk of the paper version not reflecting the electronic version and causing confusion and the potential for errors to occur.

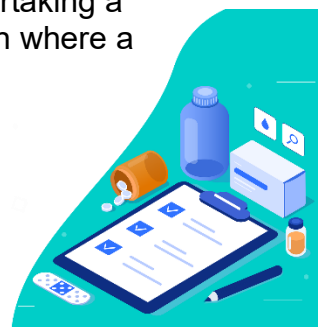
Variable Doses and PRN Medicines

If a service user is prescribed a variable dose of medication i.e. "one or two" or "5 or 10ml" then the actual dose administered to the service user must be recorded on the MAR chart or in the care log if unable to document on an eMAR. Also, it is important that the time administered is also documented especially if using a paper MAR chart.

This is important to ensure that the maximum prescribed dose of the medication is not exceeded.

Competency Assessments

It may not be possible to observe all administration techniques whilst undertaking a competency assessment, for example, the assessment may be undertaken where a service user may not be prescribed a cream. In these situations, it can be documented 'not seen this time' and assessed at another visit but there is a risk that the carer may never be assessed as competent for this technique. In these cases, we would recommend that there is a discussion with the carer where they are asked to describe what actions they would take when administering this medication and the assessment could be made from this and documented accordingly. It is important that carers are assessed as competent in all areas of medicines administration and there is evidence to show this.



Every effort has been made to ensure the information contained in this newsletter is accurate at the time of publication.

If you need any further information on medicines management please contact us as follows:

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