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3.4 MEDICATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Acorn Aged Care promotes the safe and effective use of medications for all consumers in line with current legislation and guidelines. Medication management can be provided to consumers by the Registered/Enrolled Nurse or Support Workers. The Registered/Enrolled Nurse is bound to follow professional guidelines¹ in the delivery of medications. Support Workers can only provide medication management support if they have been deemed competent to do so. Consumers are encouraged to remain independence in the management of their medications.

This Policy is developed in line with contemporary guidance for medication management including:

- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Nursing Guidelines: Management of Medicines in Aged Care 2013
- Department of Health and Ageing Guiding Principles for Medication Management in Residential Aged Care Facilities 2012
- Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council Guiding Principles for Medication Management in the Community 2012.

The legislation guiding medication management in WA is the Medicines and Poisons Act 2014 and Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016; however, this legislation does not define the roles of support workers in medication management.

Each consumer is assessed to understand what medication supports they require to ensure safe and correct medication processes and promote their independence.

The practices supporting the medication policy include:

- [Medication Guiding Principles Practice](#)
- [Medication Management and Error Reporting Practice](#)
- [Support Worker Medication Support Practice](#).

Definitions

(See 3.1.7 Definitions.)

Responsibilities

Registered nurse responsibilities

Registered Nurses are able to administer medications (prescribed and non-prescribed) as per their scope of practice and in line with the requirements of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009, Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (WA), and the Medicines and Poisons Act 2014 and Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016. The Registered Nurse is responsible for supporting consumers with their medications in the following ways:

- Ensuring they practice within their scope of practice to provide medication support
- Assessing the need for medication support for consumers where necessary
- Identifying the type of medications currently taken by the consumer and conducting medication reconciliation
- Liaising with the doctor and/or pharmacist as required
- Developing a medication plan for the consumer and identifying who will provide the medication support [this may include medication support by the Support Workers (blister packed medications and those Support Workers are competent to support the consumer with) or the Registered Nurse (other medications such as suppositories, insulin injections)]

¹ Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Nursing Guidelines: Management of Medicines in Aged Care 2013

- Reviewing medication support during reassessment and if medication errors occur
- Ensuring the competency and supervision of Support Workers to provide medication support by providing medication support training and competency assessment
- Conducting annual audits of medication management and reports to the Clinical Care Committee meeting and participating in the Medication Advisory meeting in the Clinical Care Committee twice per year.

The Registered Nurse is responsible to Acorn Aged Care in relation to medication policy support in the following ways:

- Providing clinical advice and input into policies and procedures
- Participating in the review of Medication Error Reports to identify improvements and support staff development
- Participating in the Clinical Care Committee to inform improvements and development of policy/procedures relating to medication management.

Support worker responsibilities

The Support Workers are responsible for medication support by:

- Never being involved in the management and/or administration of consumer medication, beyond their skills and training
- Ensuring that they are competent to provide medication support and refresh their competency every 12 months
- Being adequately trained by attending organisation endorsed medication training, assessed as competent by the Registered Nurse and feeling confident in performing the consumer medication assistance required of them
- Being adequately trained to identify potential adverse effects medication may have on the consumer (within their knowledge and skill)
- Liaising with their supervisor/Registered Nurse regarding medication support as required
- Following all medication support policies, procedures and practices
- Providing medication support as per the medication plan
- Reporting any medication incidents using a Medication Error Report
- Never providing medication advice or information to consumers/representatives.

Home care

Team leader responsibilities

The Team Leaders are responsible for medication support by:

- Reviewing the assessed need for medication support for home care consumers (self-administration is encouraged and supported through medication support aids such as blister packs)
- Liaising with the doctor, pharmacist and registered nurse as required
- Developing a medication plan for the consumer and identifying who will provide the medication support including medication support by the Support Workers (blister packed medications and other medications Support Workers are competent to support the consumer with) or the Registered Nurse (other medications such as suppositories, insulin injections)
- Reviewing consumers medication support during reassessment in consultation with the Registered Nurse
- Managing the follow up and implementation of improvements identified through the medication error reporting process.

See above for Support Worker medication responsibilities.

Consumer medication assessment

Where an assessment is needed to determine a consumer's capacity to participate in the management of his or her own medication, we use the following procedures:

Home care

A consumer Medication Consent Form is completed for all consumers we provide medication support for.

All consumers with capacity are encouraged to self-administer their medications. Strategies for assisting them to achieve this include the provision of blister packs, aids to open blister packs, prompting calls (telephone calls at medication administration times to prompt the consumer to take medications) and support to liaise with the medical practitioner to reduce the number and times medications are required. The Registered Nurse can assist in liaising with the medical practitioner as required.

Should medications require secure storage (due to a consumer accessing medications outside of the prescribed times) strategies for supporting safe storage such as a locked box are considered and implemented if deemed appropriate and detailed in the support plan.

We provide consumers with the NPS Medicinewise information sheet (in the Resources file) to assist them in managing their medications safely.

Residential care

Self medication

All consumers with capacity are encouraged to self-administer their medications. A medical practitioner, Registered Nurse or Pharmacist, completes an assessment of the consumer's ability to self-medicate if they wish. Strategies for assisting them to achieve this include the provision of blister packs, aids to open blister packs, and support to liaise with the medical practitioner to reduce the number and times medications are required. Consumers are assessed as competent to self-administer medications and are provided with a locked area in their room to store their medications. The consumer and management have a copy of the key.

The Registered Nurse confirms (through observation of medication self-administration and discussion) with the consumer that they are taking their medication as prescribed at support plan review (or more regularly if required) and refers the consumer to the medical practitioner for review if concerned there has been a change in their ability to self-medicate. The assessment of the consumer's ability to self-medicate is documented and a support plan developed.

Should the consumer fail to safely store medications so other consumers can not access them, the Registered Nurse discusses this with the consumer, completes a Medication Error Report and monitors compliance with medication storage. The issue is referred to the medical practitioner if required.

Staff medication provision

Should the consumer be unable to self-medicate assessment and support planning to ascertain the provision of medication by staff is developed.

Documentation requirements for the provision of medication

Home care requirements for medication support

If the consumer is having medication support, that is, the consumer is being prompted to take their medications, assisted with packaging and ensured the consumer has taken their medications the following is required:

- A Medication Consent Form is completed that outlines the type of medication assistance is to be provided (such as prompting for time of day or assistance with medication packaging)
- A Medication Order that details the doctor's prescription (which may be a signed patient medication summary, blister pack sheet provided by the pharmacist or a Medication Order form)
- A Medication Plan that describes the type of medication, assistance to be provided by the Support Workers including type, time, dose, and route of medication for the consumer is completed by the Registered Nurse

The consumer Medication Plan includes the following:

- Consumer's name (including three identifiers)
- Medication to be given
- Dose to be administered
- Specific route
- Time/s to be given
- Specific instructions regarding the medication, e.g. to be taken with food
- Commencement date of medication
- Cessation or review date of the medication.
- A Medication Record Sheet or signing sheet for Support Workers to notate:
 - their initials if they have ensured the client has taken the medication
 - 'S' for self-administered if they have observed the consumer self-administering their medications
 - 'N' if the prescribed medication is not available
 - 'R' if the consumer refuses the medication.

Residential care requirements for medication support

The Registered Nurse assesses the consumer, conducts medication reconciliation and develops a Medication Support Plan to meet the consumer's needs. This includes consideration of strategies to support the consumer to take medication such as altered medication forms and swallowing support. All consumers have a photograph taken (with consent) that is provided to the pharmacy for inclusion on the medications/documentation provided and in the consumers electronic records in Acorn Aged Care. This is updated annually to ensure accuracy, and ensures that we have a contemporary photograph of each consumer.

Limits to medication management practices

See [Medication Management Guiding Principles Practice](#).

Support workers are not placed in a position where they must make discretionary judgements concerning a consumer's health status when the consumer needs assistance from expert health professionals.

Examples of times when discretionary judgement may be required include:

- A consumer that needs to be monitored because of unstable health (unstable health is when a person's health is inconsistent and requires some intervention and changing of medication on a regular or ongoing basis).
- A consumer that consistently displays behaviour impacting on their ability to safely receive prescribed medications, e.g. takes too much medication, refuses to take medication, takes incorrect doses or misuses medication on a regular basis.
- Professional medication instructions are unclear, out of date, omitted or open to interpretation.

In these situations, the Support Worker informs the supervisor/Registered Nurse who contacts the consumer's doctor or other health professional for advice and ensure that the consumer is appropriately reviewed. The Registered Nurse provides medication management services to complex consumers.

Categories of medication

Medications are classified as either first category or second category medications. Support Workers may assist consumers with second category medications as specified in Table 3.4.1: Categories of Medication.

Table 3.4.1: Categories of Medication

First Category Medication	Second Category Medication
(Health Professionals only) Support Workers are not to provide support to consumers with this medication. The Registered/Enrolled Nurse can give medicines in this category that she is competent to give.	(Special skills/training required) Support Workers may assist consumers with this medication after receiving approved competency-based training and competency assessment that is updated on an annual basis.
	Scheduled 8 medications if in medication aid.
	Tablets, Patches and Wafers.
	Eye drops; Ear drops; Nose drops and Sprays.
	Topical, rectal and vaginal preparations (eg creams and ointments)
Any medications that are to be nebulised that have not been dispensed and prepared by a pharmacist into unit doses.	Any medications that are to be nebulised that have been dispensed and prepared by a pharmacist into unit doses. Metered dose inhalers that have been dispensed by a pharmacist.
Medicines given via feeding tubes (eg gastrostomy, jejunostomy) that have not been dispensed and prepared by a pharmacist into unit doses.	Medicines given via feeding tubes (eg gastrostomy, jejunostomy) that have been dispensed and prepared by a pharmacist into unit doses.
<p>Medical Practitioner Only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrathecal (into the spinal cord area) • Intraperitoneal (into peritoneum/ abdominal cavity) • Intraventricular (into ventricles of brain) • Epidural <p>Registered Nurse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intravenous • Intramuscular • Subcutaneous • Enemas, pessaries and suppositories <p>Enrolled Nurse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intramuscular or subcutaneous if checked by a Registered Nurse • Enemas, pessaries and suppositories 	

First Category Medication	Second Category Medication
All medications that are administered by the nasogastric route.	
Emergency situations: In an emergency situation Support Workers are not to practice outside of the scope of their ability and knowledge and are always to call for assistance (ambulance, Team Leader/Coordinator, Registered Nurse, medical practitioner, Pharmacist) if an emergency situation arises.	

Staff training for medication support

Registered nurses have the knowledge and skill to reconcile, manage, administer and coordinate the management of medications as part of their scope of practice. Should the Registered Nurse require further training and support in the management of medications, they seek professional development. Advice and support is sought by the Registered Nurse from medical practitioners and pharmacists as required. Enrolled nurses who have received appropriate medication training may administer medications within their scope of practice.

Support Workers are trained in the supervision, prompting and delivery of medications including medication awareness training and competency. The Registered Nurse assesses the competence of Support Workers in the management and administration of medications including assessing the competence of each Support Worker in the administration of approved category two medications. A range of competency forms are completed by the Registered Nurse and filed in the Support Worker’s personnel file. Competency is assessed twice for the first assessment and once annually thereafter.

Residential care control of prescription drugs

Not included in example

Policy review

Not included in example