




MEDICATIONS

**GENERAL INFORMATION,
ADMINISTRATION,
TYPES, and DOCUMENTATION**



THE ROLE OF CAREGIVERS WHEN ASSISTING WITH MEDICATIONS

A medication is a substance administered for the diagnosis, cure, treatment or relief of a symptom or for prevention of disease.

Anyone assisting with medication administration should:

- assure that the proper medication is taken.
- have knowledge about possible side effects or adverse reactions of that medication.
- be able to report important information to the prescriber.
- know when to seek assistance.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICATIONS



GENERIC VS BRAND NAMES

Generic name:

- is given by the manufacturer who first developed the drug.
- is the name by which the drug will be known throughout the world.
- is often derived from the chemical name.

Brand name (trade name):

- is the name of a distinctive product (medication) that a company produces and registers.
- distinguishes that medication from others.
- is capitalized and identified with the registered trademark symbol ®.

Example:

- Acetaminophen (generic) – Tylenol ® (brand name for a specific product containing acetaminophen).

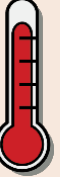


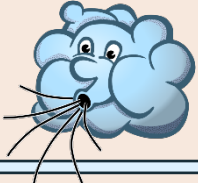

PRN MEDICATIONS

1. PRN is an abbreviation for the Latin *pro re nata* meaning “when needed” or “as needed”.
2. It is used when a medication is only given under certain circumstances, not on a scheduled basis.
3. A PRN eliminates delays when a medication is needed by an individual.
4. When a person relies on staff to assist with taking medications, there must be a protocol in place for all PRN medications.



STORAGE

MEDICATIONS WILL BREAK DOWN IF NOT STORED PROPERLY.

Temperature:	Medications should be stored at room temperature or slightly cooler. Too warm or too cold will cause the medication to lose effectiveness.	
Moisture:	Medications should be stored in a dry place. Avoid damp places such as bathrooms or near stoves.	
Light:	Light can deactivate some medications which is why they often come in opaque containers.	
Air:	Oxygen can inactivate some medications, therefore keep containers tightly closed to limit exposure to air.	
Time:	Over time, medications will break down, thus they have an expiration date. Make sure new medications are obtained prior to expiration date.	

DISPOSAL OF MEDICATIONS

MIX

Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds;



PLACE

Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag;



THROW

Throw the container in your household trash;



SCRATCH OUT

Scratch out all personal information on the prescription label of your empty pill bottle or empty medicine packaging to make it unreadable, then dispose of the container.



Medications that are expired, contaminated, refused, or discontinued must be disposed of safely.

To dispose of medications:

- Check the prescription label for directions for disposal.
- Check if there is an authorized collection site in the community such as at the hospital or pharmacy.
- Check the FDA flush list to see if it can be flushed down the toilet.
- Dispose of medications in the trash if there is no other option.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS



THE RIGHTS OF MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

When helping someone take medications, you must know and follow the 7 rights of medication administration. These rights are:

- **Right individual or person**
- **Right medication**
- **Right dose**
- **Right time and date**
- **Right route**
- **Right position**
- **Right form (consistency, texture, e.g., crushed, mixed with food)**

WHY ARE THESE 7 RIGHTS IMPORTANT?

The right PERSON:

- If a medication is given to the wrong person, it could cause harm or even death.



The right MEDICATION:

- Check the MAR and the label on the medication to make sure they match.



The right DOSE:

- Giving too much or too little of the medication could cause serious harm by changing the level of the drug in the body.



The right TIME/DATE:

- Medications need to be given at certain times of the day, far enough apart from previous doses to maintain a therapeutic blood level.
- Some medications are only given on certain days of the week.



MORE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 7 RIGHTS



The right ROUTE:

- The route is where the medication goes into or onto the person.
- If a medication is given by the wrong route, it can cause harm. For example, an ear drop being placed in someone's eye could cause serious damage to the eye.



The right POSITION:

- When taking an oral medication, the person should be sitting as upright as possible.
- For medications that go in the ear or eye, the person will need to have the head tilted.



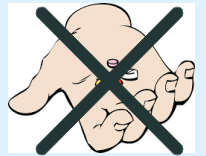
The right FORM:

- Some medications may need to be crushed or mixed with food to ease swallowing.

PREPARATION BEFORE GIVING MEDICATIONS

Prepare and administer medications for only one person at a time!

- Give your full attention to preparing medications.
- Check the MAR to see when the last dose was given and when the next dose is due.
- Never place any oral medication (tablet, capsule, etc.) into your own bare hand. Transfer oral medications from the container into a cup.
- Never take medications from unlabeled containers.
- Never prepare medications before it is time for them to be taken. They cannot be left in the dispensing cup to be given later.
- Never administer medications that have been prepared by someone else under any circumstances.



CUTTING OR CRUSHING MEDICATIONS



To help someone swallow a tablet or capsule, the medication may need to be cut, crushed, or placed in food. A capsule may need to be emptied into food.

- Tablets often have an indented line across them making them easy to break in half. Tablets can also be cut with a pill cutter.
- Tablets may be crushed with a mortar and pestle or a pill crusher.
- Some capsules can be opened, and the contents mixed with food.
- Always clarify with the pharmacist if a medication can be cut or crushed, or a capsule opened.
- Medications that cannot be crushed or split include:
 - Extended release, sustained, release, delayed release, etc.
 - Any coated tablet

MIXING MEDICATIONS WITH FOOD

Medications, whether as whole or crushed tablets or intact or opened capsules, can be mixed with food to make swallowing easier.

Foods to use:

- Applesauce, pureed fruit
- Mashed fruit such as bananas
- Baby food
- Custard, pudding
- Yogurt, cottage cheese, ice cream



Foods NOT to be used:



- Peanut butter and honey are associated with a high risk for choking and should **NEVER** be used to mix with medications.

GENERAL RULES FOR MIXING MEDICATIONS WITH FOOD



Mix medication with a small amount of food.

After it is taken, have the person drink a glass of liquid to help the medication get into stomach and be absorbed.

Never leave a container of medication mixed with food in the refrigerator or on the counter, because:

- the medication may start to break down if left too long.
- the medication may accidentally be taken by another person.



TAKING MEDICATIONS ON AN EMPTY STOMACH

- Also known as “NPO” – nothing per os (or mouth).
- May be needed because for some medications, having food/fluids in the stomach alters absorption or slows the time it takes for a medications to begin to work.
- The “rule” for NPO is to take a medication either one hour before or two hours after eating or drinking.



MONITORING MEDICATIONS



Monitoring is done by:

- Observing for symptoms or side effects.
- Measuring levels of the drug in the blood or other blood tests such as liver tests, blood sugar levels, etc.

Side effects:

- All medications have side effects that can be physical or emotional.
- Usually, side effects are unwanted.
- Some drugs are prescribed to utilize potential side effects (e.g., giving an antihistamine that causes drowsiness to help someone sleep at night).

TYPES OF MEDICATIONS



ORAL MEDICATIONS

The most common route to take a medication is orally or by mouth. Medications should be taken with 6 to 8 ounces of fluids so that the medication dissolves and is absorbed.

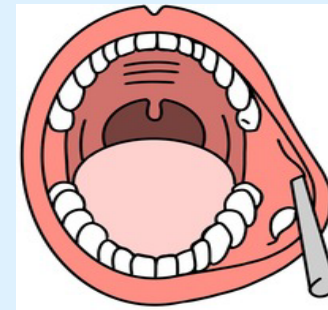


Sublingual medications:



- are placed under the tongue and kept there until dissolved (not chewed or swallowed).

Buccal medications:



- are placed between the gums/teeth and cheek and kept there until dissolved.

LIQUID MEDICATIONS

MIXING:

- Check to see if a liquid medication must be shaken before use and if so, vigorously shake the bottle for 15 to 30 seconds each time it is given.
- Do not mix different liquid medications together before giving.



MEASURING:

- Use a calibrated medicine cup, a syringe, or the specific measuring spoon that came with the medication.



- Never use household measuring spoons or silverware spoons as they may not hold the correct amount.



MEDICATIONS ABSORBED THROUGH SKIN OR MEMBRANES

Dermal medications:

- Lotions, creams and ointments
- Drops
- Vaginal and rectal medications

Transdermal medications:

The medication is contained in sticky patches applied onto the skin for a certain amount of time, such as for a day or week. If ordered daily, reapply at the same time each day for continuous delivery.

When applying:

- Alternate sites to prevent skin irritation.
- Clean and dry skin before applying.
- Do not apply over scars, folds, or wrinkles, or on irritated skin.



Remove carefully so as not to tear the skin. Clean and dry the area.

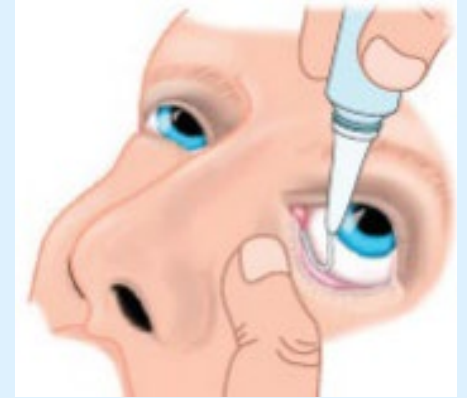
EYE MEDICATIONS

EYE DROPS:

Using one hand, gently pull down on the lower eyelid to form a pouch.

Holding the dropper about one inch away from the eye, squeeze out the appropriate drops into the pouch.

Do not let the dropper touch the eye or skin around eye.



EYE OINTMENT OR CREAM:

Before applying, wipe the eye with a cotton ball from the inner to outer corner.

Gently squeeze the tube, moving it along the inside lower lid, and instilling about a 1-centimeter (1/3 inch) thread. Break off ribbon from tube by releasing pressure and removing the tube – do not fingertips.

Do not place ointment onto the eye itself.

Never let the tube tip touch the eye.






EAR MEDICATION

Administer ear drops by pulling the mid-outer ear gently backward and upward to straighten the ear canal, then instill the correct number of drops into the ear canal.

To prevent contamination, do not touch any part of the dropper to the ear.

A stylized illustration of a person's head in profile, facing right. The person is using a nasal spray. The spray is depicted as a white plume with three vertical lines above the nozzle, indicating the spray. The person's nose is shown with a black outline. The background is a light blue circle. The overall style is simple and graphic.

After using,
the person
should not
blow their
nose for at
least 15
minutes.

INTRANASAL MEDICATION

INHALED MEDICATIONS

- **Metered dose inhaler** – releases a puff of medication when the person pushes down on the container.
- **Dry powder inhaler** – the person inhales a powder from the container.
- **Nebulizer** – turns liquid medication into a fine mist that is inhaled through a mouthpiece or facemask.



DOCUMENTATION



DOCUMENTATION OF ADMINISTRATION



Anytime medication assistance is given, it must be documented.

Documentation is done on a Medication Administration Record (MAR) either in paper form or electronically.

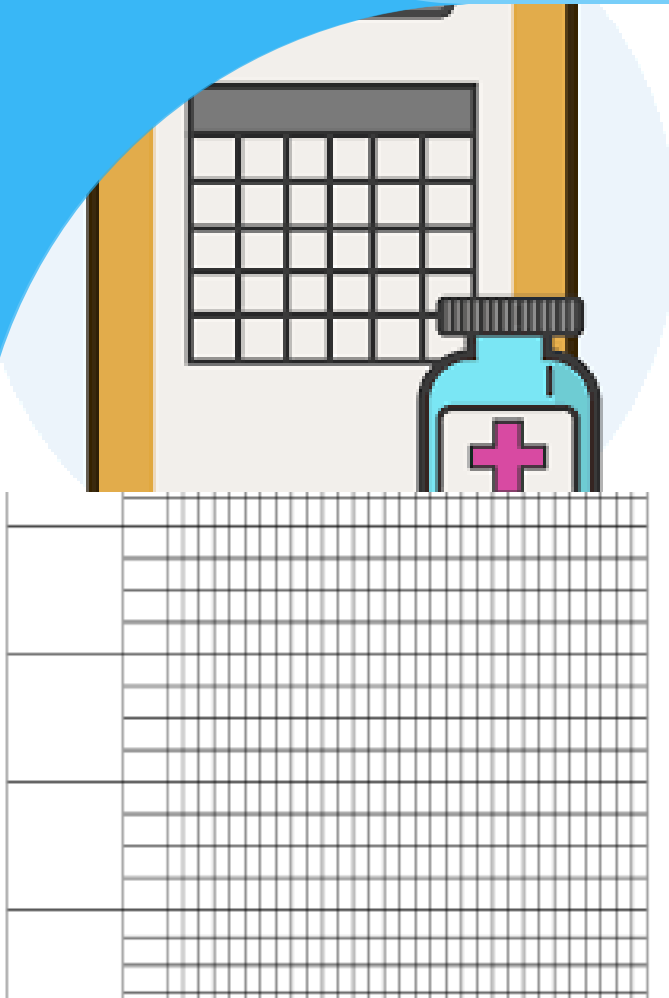
The MAR shows the:

- Person's name and identifying information
- Medication names and doses.
- Time/dates for taking the medication.
- A place to initial that the medication was taken.



MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION RECORD

- The Medication Administration Record helps to make sure that medications are given on time and are given only once at the appropriate time.
- The Medication Administration Record documents that the person who gave the medication saw the person swallow it, inhale it, or that the medication was otherwise administered correctly.



RULES FOR DOCUMENTING

When assisting with medications, attend to only one person's medications at a time.

- Place your initials in the correct location of the MAR only after you have witnessed that the medication was taken or administered correctly.
- On a paper MAR, ditto marks are never used, nor can anything be erased.
- If the medication was not taken or administered, place your initials in the correct spot and note the reason for this in the appropriate place on the MAR.
- If the medication was refused, continue to encourage the person to take the medication until the window of time for giving the medication has been exceeded.
 - Place you initials in the correct spot on the MAR and explain the reason the medication was not administered.
 - If the medication was set up, it cannot be returned to the container. It must be disposed of.



MEDICATION INFORMATION



Thank you
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