

Caring for Care Homes

Issue 18, September 2016

Newsletter for Care Home staff, General Practitioners and Community Pharmacists

Top tips to reduce excess stock

Each year approximately £5.5 million is wasted on unused medicines. A lot of medicines that are being returned to pharmacies unused and 'wasted' are those that have been prescribed on a when required or 'PRN' basis eg laxatives and painkillers. Our top tips for minimising wastage of PRN medication:

1. Only order the amount of 'PRN' medication that is required.
2. It is not necessary to destroy unused PRN medication and order a new supply each month.
3. Any stock of PRN medication that is still in use and in date should be 'carried forward' from one month to the next.

4. Use the reverse of the MAR chart to record the times when a resident does not require their PRN medicines and the reason why. This will give a clear picture of how frequently the medicine is used, which can help the prescriber check the appropriateness of the drug, dosage and the quantity prescribed.

5. Residents may be switched from one brand of drug to another as part of local prescribing changes. In this instance it is important to finish off existing supplies of medication before ordering a supply of the new one.



In a recent pharmacy audit the following medicines had been returned unused from care homes:

Drug	Qty
Paracetamol 500mg	361
Laxido	136
Co-codamol 8mg/500mg	90
Senna 7.5mg	82

Don't miss out on flu jabs!

Flu is a highly infectious disease with symptoms that come on very quickly. The most common symptoms of flu are fever, chills, headache, aches and pains in the joints and muscles, and extreme tiredness. Healthy individuals usually recover within two to seven days, but for some the disease can lead to hospitalisation, permanent disability or even death.

The best way to avoid catching and spreading flu is by having the vaccination before the flu season starts. It is really important to ensure all your residents are vaccinated against flu as soon as possible. GP practices and some community pharmacies offer a flu vaccination service and you will need to discuss the best way to ensure all residents are vaccinated in a timely manner.

This newsletter includes a "Flu special" describing the importance of ensuring that all your employees are vaccinated as well as your residents.

Remember! The flu jab is required every year for optimum protection.

'Remember, it is important to share'

Each quarter the **Caring for Care Homes** team produces newsletters and guidance sheets that can be used within your care home to help you with all medication queries. It is important to share this information and not just file it away! Here are some ways that you can use to share this great resource:



Share with the whole team

- Highlight the guidance sheets to the team in team meetings and other team communications.
- Display the guidance sheets and newsletters in the staff room.
- Keep a copy of the guidance sheets and newsletters with the index sheet in a folder that is easily accessible to all staff so that they can use and refer to the information to maintain and improve their knowledge.

Training: use the guidance sheets for staff training. The guidance sheets are well placed to give up to date and relevant advice for all members of staff working within the care home.

Group discussions: at team meetings pick out a guidance sheet for discussion. Allow the team to identify good practice and areas for improvement within the care home.

Policy writing: use the guidance sheets to ensure that your care home medicines policy is clear and accurate. The guidance sheets will provide information on different areas of your medicines policy and can be used as a reference source to add detail and highlight good practice.

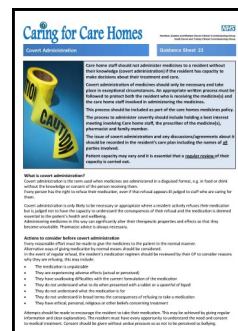
Review regularly when administering covertly

A recent judgement by the Court of Protection has highlighted that it is important to ensure all the correct procedural steps are followed when making any decisions concerning the covert administration of medication.

It is essential that any covert medication is done in the least restrictive way possible and that safeguards are in place, for example, regular reviews of the decision to covertly medicate and whether it remains the least restrictive option in that particular resident's case. There are a number of steps that should be followed to ensure that the most appropriate decision is made for every resident as an individual.

- The steps include assessing the resident's capacity to understand information and make decisions, a best interests meeting should be held and should include all of the relevant people (healthcare professionals, resident's representative and family members).
- If covert administration of medication is agreed then this should be fully documented in the resident's care plan. An agreed review duration should be specified as well as triggers for an early review (eg change of medication).
- A review should include all current and appropriate information relating to the resident and should involve all relevant people including healthcare professionals, resident's representatives and family members.

Please refer to the Caring for Care Homes Covert Administration Guidance sheet 23 for more information.



Updated Guidance sheets: Please remember to replace your old copies within your care home

◆ **16 Inhaler Technique and Respiratory conditions 4_2016**

◆ **17 When required medication version 4_2016**

Caring for Care Homes flu special

Keep well and protect your residents

It's the start of the flu season again and vaccines will be available from September/October onwards

Flu is a serious illness

There are around **75,000** GP consultations, **27,000** hospitalisations and **900** intensive care admissions for flu in England each year. In 2012/13 there were estimated to be **11,000** deaths attributable to influenza (flu). Flu is especially serious for those with underlying health conditions, including those in long term care.

Vaccination is the best way of protecting people, including the over 65s, those with underlying health conditions and frontline care staff.

Duty of care to our residents

The National flu immunisation programme 2016/17 sets out our responsibilities as employers:



Frontline health and social care workers have a duty of care to protect their patients and employees from infection.

Therefore, as in previous years, flu immunisation should be offered by care home employers to all employees directly involved in delivering care. It is vital that health and social care staff not only protect themselves against flu, but recognise the importance of protecting patients in their care and their professional responsibility in this regard to get themselves vaccinated.

Key actions for care home managers

Promote awareness of vaccination among all eligible staff

Strongly encourage all frontline staff to take up vaccination

Make it easy for staff to get their vaccination (eg in work time if feasible) and to obtain reimbursement

Encourage all staff to be champions and advocates of vaccination with colleagues and their clients

Monitor and report uptake of vaccination among staff teams

Influenza vaccination is also an important tool helping us to build organisational resilience during the winter months, reducing sickness absence and disruption to essential services.

The earlier people are vaccinated, the better the protection against influenza for both staff and clients. Vaccines will be available from September/October 2016.

How to obtain vaccination

Vaccination is free to everyone aged 65 years and over, family carers, pregnant women, people with a clinical risk condition, and children aged 2, 3 and 4 years old and those in school years 1, 2 and 3.

More information on eligibility can be found at: www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/who-should-have-flu-vaccine.aspx

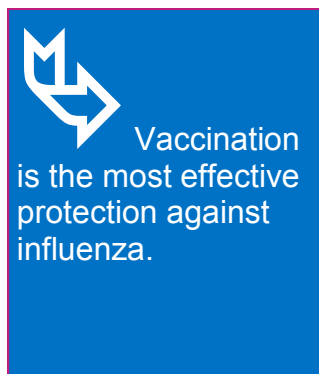
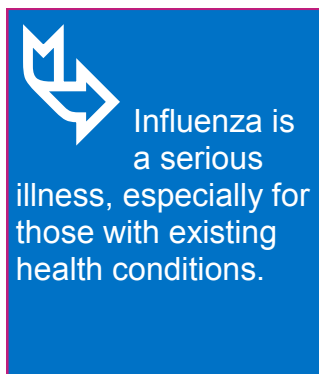
Frontline care workers should be able to obtain free vaccination, either arranged or reimbursed through their employer.

Further information can also be found on the NHS Employers Flu Fighter campaign website: www.nhsemployers.org/campaigns/flu-fighter

Vaccination is the best protection

Some of the barriers to vaccination are fear of side-effects. Vaccination has been shown to be the safest and most effective protection against flu.

The key messages are:



Useful contacts

Name	Title	Email Address
Ruth Harrell	Consultant in Public Health, Plymouth City Council	ruth.harrell@plymouth.gov.uk
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Mark Kealy	Consultant for Public Health Team, Devon County Council	mark.kealy@devon.gov.uk
Charles Biscoe	Screening and Immunisation Coordinator	cbiscoe@nhs.net

Useful websites

Website	Link
NHS Choices:	www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/pages/flu-influenza-vaccine.aspx
10 myths about flu and the flu vaccine:	www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/Flu-myths.aspx
Information for staff:	www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flu-programme-training-slide-set-for-healthcare-professionals

NHS Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
NHS South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group



Information supplied from Public Health, Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council