

Caring for Care Homes

Issue 23, December 2017  Newsletter for Care Home staff, General Practitioners and Community Pharmacists



**Keep your residents home this Christmas:
reduce the risk of hospital admissions**



Respiratory illness is more prevalent in the winter and the risk of admission to hospital, particularly in the elderly, is high. What can you do to reduce the risk for your residents?

High risk residents: ensure staff are aware of residents at higher risk of respiratory illness and are vigilant for warning signs of ill health (eg Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease(COPD), reduced mobility, respiratory tract infection, immunocompromised).

Antibiotics: when antibiotics are prescribed for a resident for immediate use, ensure they are started as soon as possible and the course is completed. Follow dosage instructions closely as some antibiotics may need to be taken with food, while some need to be taken on an empty stomach.

Inhalers: where prescribed, ensure preventer inhalers (eg beclomethasone) are taken as directed by the GP, and reliever inhalers (eg salbutamol) are not over used. Any issues should be reported to the resident's GP.

Spacers: if a resident is experiencing difficulties using an inhaler, inform the GP to see if a different device could be prescribed or if a spacer would be beneficial.

Inhaler technique: staff and residents should be aware of the different inhaler techniques required for the range of devices available. Inhaler technique videos and cards are available on the NEW Devon CCG website.

Asthma and COPD management plans: ensure staff know where to access these plans as they will detail the symptoms to look out for and the steps to take, including when emergency medical attention is required.

COPD rescue packs: relevant staff must be aware of the purpose of these packs and know when they should be used. When the medication is in use, remember to contact the resident's GP as soon as possible to inform them and request a new prescription to replace the COPD rescue pack.

Date checking: ensure medication that is not frequently used is in date (eg rescue packs).

To access further supportive resources, go to www.newdevonccg.nhs.uk and type **COPD** or **Inhaler Technique** in the search bar. Through raising awareness of the contributing factors of respiratory illness we hope to keep residents in their own home and avoid unnecessary hospital admission.



Stay well this Christmas, get a flu jab!



No-one wants to have flu this Christmas, so it is important for all care home staff and residents to have their flu vaccination even if they missed out earlier in the season.

Eligible residents can organise their free flu vaccination via their GP or community pharmacy (if offering the service).

GP practices and many community pharmacies are now providing free flu vaccination for health and social care staff who are employed by a registered residential care or nursing home or registered domiciliary care provider. We recommend that staff contact their registered GP practice or community pharmacy to check they are providing the service before attending. Staff will need to take ID which shows their name and employer, such as an ID badge, letter from their employer or a recent pay slip. Some employers will already have a flu vaccination scheme in place and some staff will already be eligible for free vaccination by being in one of the defined at-risk groups set out on NHS Choices.

Please record staff uptake using this template: www.england.nhs.uk/south/info-professional/public-health/infection-winter/care-guidance/. Employers can find a range of useful resources at www.nhsemployers.org/flufightercare and www.england.nhs.uk/south/info-professional/public-health/infection-winter/.



Important information about change to Homely Remedies authorisation in Care Homes

The Clinical Commissioning Groups are no longer able to authorise a Homely Remedies list for all residents in the Devon area. The currently authorised Homely Remedies Lists expire on the 16th December 2017 (NEW Devon CCG area) and 14th January 2018 (South Devon & Torbay CCG area). However, to support you we have designed a template document that could be used if you and your GP practice(s) would find this useful. Lists can be individualised for a single resident or agreed for all residents of a single practice.

The template has been added to our NEW Devon CCG website and our 'Guidance Sheet 21' has also been updated with this new information.

Why have a homely remedies list? With the cough and cold season upon us it is helpful to have a homely remedies list in your care home ready for any of your residents who may be feeling unwell over the Christmas period. The list includes medications such as paracetamol which can be purchased and stored for residents to use for up to 48 hours without the need to contact a GP. It should be noted, however, that GP practices do not have to agree a list with care homes.

New way of reporting Controlled Drugs incidents

Reporting Controlled Drugs (CD) related incidents has changed and you can now use the online CD Reporting Tool: www.cdreporting.co.uk. Before you use this site you will need to register.

When registering you will need to use the following information.

- **Region** section: Choose **South (South West)**
- **CCG** section choose either:
 - **Northern, Eastern and Western Devon CCG**, if your care home is in Plymouth or north, east or west Devon.
 - **South Devon and Torbay CCG**, if your care home is in Torbay or the south Devon area.

Any problems please contact the helpdesk on **0113 825 5238**.

Free e-learning - feedback

In our September newsletter we told you about a new exciting **free** training package for all care home staff who are involved with managing medicines. Since launching this we have had the following feedback from two care homes:

"I have found the resources to be extensive and straightforward to use however the quantity of information requires a significant amount of time to enable you to work through. Overall I would rate the website highly."

"There are some great resources on there as well as learning tools. My nurses have signed up and have a month to work their way through it."

For more details on how to register for this training package, please check out our September 2017 newsletter.

Coming soon: updated guidance sheets

Please remember to replace your old copies



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

To contact us please email: D-CCG.CaringForCareHomes@nhs.net
Or go to www.newdevonccg.nhs.uk and type 'Caring for care homes' into the search bar to find our webpages

