

Caring for Care Homes

Issue 28, March 2019 Newsletter for Care Home staff, General Practitioners and Community Pharmacists

Gabapentin and Pregabalin become Controlled Drugs on 1st April 2019

Gabapentin (Neurontin®) and Pregabalin (Lyrica®/Alzain®) are now Schedule 3 Controlled Drugs.

What difference will this make for care homes?

- The storage of gabapentin and pregabalin has not changed, and they can be kept in the same way as any drug which is not a CD.
- The change in legal status does not involve any changes in record keeping, you will not need to keep records in the CD register.
- Gabapentin and pregabalin prescriptions will look slightly different when they are written as the quantity is required in words and figures.



Gabapentin and pregabalin will not be able to be written on repeat dispensing (batch) prescriptions. A gabapentin or pregabalin prescription is only valid for 28 days from the date of issue and the prescription will normally be limited to a supply of up to 30 days treatment.

Disposal of unwanted gabapentin and pregabalin:

- **Care Homes without nursing** – should be returned to the Pharmacy for destruction in the same way as any other drug is returned. The pharmacy will denature the drug on your behalf.
- **Care Homes with nursing** – should be denatured by a registered nurse before being handed to the waste disposal company. Written records and witnesses are not legally required. Although some care homes may choose to do this as good practice

In addition to legal requirements all care homes should follow their medicines policy.

Blister packs vs original packs: A care home view



Are you thinking about using original packs? We asked one care home about their experience:

“At Porthgwara Nursing Home we have always used original packaging for our medications. However, many of the nurses, myself included, have plenty of experience of using MDS systems in other settings in which we have worked.”

“As a Registered Nurse myself, I prefer using original packaging as I can make all the checks that I was taught to make when I completed my nurse training including correct medication, dose, strength, date of expiry, etc. I find it requires me to engage more actively with the medication administration process which is a positive benefit. I feel safer using original packaging as there are fewer steps in the process where an error might occur. Storage can be onerous with MDS systems, whereas original packaging takes up much less room. When the original packs are empty, we remove all patient details/labels then recycle the empty cardboard boxes reducing the environmental impact.”

Other feedback includes:

- ✓ Easier to identify medication in original packs.
- ✓ Quicker to check in medicines order.
- ✓ Patient information leaflet readily available.
- ✓ Can be more appropriate to send medication home/hospital/day trips with resident.
- ✓ Easier to transport if a resident has moved to their room due to illness etc.
- ✓ Easier to store, less storage requirements.
- ✓ Waste reduction.
- ✓ Positive environmental impact (homes recycling of cardboard, less plastic etc).



Nutrition and Hydration awareness

March was the month for Nutrition and Hydration Awareness, with the 8th Annual Nutrition and Hydration Week which took place between Monday 11th and Sunday 17th. The mission of Nutrition and Hydration Week is... ***“To create a global movement that will focus energy, activity and engagement on nutrition and hydration as fundamental elements of maintaining health and well-being for our global community”***

Global sounds big! So, what does this mean for you and your care home?

Why would you want to focus on nutrition and hydration?

Providing sufficient nutrition and hydration allows you to play a valuable part in improving effectiveness, safety and experience of care in your care home. Through providing good quality foods and sufficient fluids (good nutrition) you will be:

- Helping people to recover from ill health, infections, or following injury.
- Ensuring people have a positive experience of care.
- Treating and caring for people in a safe environment.
- Enhancing quality of life.

Fortified Hot Chocolate
387Kcal, 18.6g protein
45p per serving

Ingredients

- 200ml full fat milk
- 30g (2½ tbsp) skimmed milk powder
- 20g (4 tsp) hot chocolate powder with added vitamins and minerals, eg Nesquik® hot chocolate powder
- 15ml (1 tbsp) double cream
- Marshmallows (optional)

Method

1. Add the skimmed milk powder to the full-fat milk and mix well to make fortified milk
2. Warm the fortified milk
3. Add warmed fortified milk gradually to the hot chocolate powder and stir well
4. Stir in the double cream
5. Add marshmallows if desired

What to look out for:

- Unintentional weight loss of 5-10% or more over 3-6 months is a key indicator.
- A low body weight i.e. a body mass index (BMI) under 18.5kg/m² is another.
- Wounds taking a long time to heal.
- A reduced appetite, or lack of interest in eating and drinking.
- Feeling tired all the time, having poor concentration, low mood or depression.
- Feeling weaker or feeling cold most of the time.

How can you take steps to provide good nutrition and hydration?

Before you reach for sip feeds ensure you have tried fortifying food. The first dietary advice is usually:

- Eating foods that are high in calories and protein, or adding them to other foods.
- Snacking between meals and eating little and often.
- Having drinks that contain lots of calories such as the hot chocolate recipe on the left.



What Next? Further resources are available from British Dietetic Association and Malnutrition Pathway: www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/MalnutritionFactSheet.pdf and www.malnutritionselfscreening.org/pdfs/advice-sheet.pdf

Updated Guidance sheets coming soon

Medicines management checklist v4_2019

Storage of medicines audit v4_2019

Controlled Drugs audit v4_2019

Medication administration record audit v4_2019

Topical medication v6_2019