



Department of  
Developmental Disabilities

Office of MUI/Registry Unit

John R. Kasich, Governor  
John L. Martin, Director

## Health & Safety Alert #55-07-11

### Medication Administration

---

Each year between 50,000 - 100,000 Americans die as a result of medication errors. In addition, another 1.3 million Americans are injured due to medication errors (Institute of Medicine (IOM), 2006). This alert has been developed to help address issues surrounding medication administration in an effort to protect the health and welfare of Ohioans with Developmental Disabilities. All medications have risks and need to be handled and administered thoughtfully and carefully.

Medication Administration Certification prepares staff to give oral and topical medications in general; it does not give DD personnel all the information they need to pass all medications to any person.

**Before DD personnel pass any medications to any person they must have appropriate certification and training and be sure to know the following about each of the medications:**

- What the medication is
- What is it used for
- What is the expected outcome
- Are there any special instructions or precautions related to giving the medication or to the person taking the medication
- What are potential problems or side effects
- Who to call if there are problems or the expected outcome does not occur

This information can be obtained through pharmacy handouts, physician instructions, a medication handbook (such as the Nurse's Drug Handbook), or other reputable source.

**This information should be in writing and available at all times.**

**The 5 Rights of Medication Administration are:**

- The **right medication**
- At the **right time**
- In the **right amount**
- To the **right person**
- By the **right route**

**The Medication Administration Record (MAR) and the medication label must be checked 3 times to assure the 5 Rights during every medication administration:**

- First check the label against the MAR to assure the label and MAR details are current, that they match, that the medication label matches what is in the container and that the medication dosage for that time has not already been given.
- Check the label and MAR a second time when putting the medication into the medication cup to be sure the correct medication and the correct amount is being prepared for the correct person at the correct time for the correct route.
- Finally, the MAR and label should be checked again as the medication container is being closed. This is to assure again that the right medication is being prepared in the right amount at the right time to be given to the right person by the right route.

**A medication error has occurred whenever one of the 5 Rights is not correct.** All medication errors are by definition Unusual Incidents and should be recorded like all Unusual Incidents (per OAC 5123:2-17). A medication error may also be an MUI if there are significant risks or harm to the individual as a result of an error.

**Physicians, Nurse Practitioners or another legally authorized healthcare professional *must* prescribe the appropriate dosage, interval and reason for administration of an as needed (PRN) medication; even if the medication can be purchased over-the-counter:** DODD authorization for unlicensed personnel to administer medications only authorizes medications to be administered by unlicensed personnel if they have been prescribed.

- To meet the requirement that unlicensed personnel do not make judgments about medications being given, the reason for the PRN should be stated clearly. Examples include:
  - Temperature over 102;

- Complaint of pain as evidenced by\_\_\_;
  - Individual has not had a bowel movement for over 24 hours etc.
- If a PRN is to be given based on a condition (Ex: bowel issue) the condition must be monitored closely to ensure the PRN is given when needed and as prescribed.

**Individual Specific Training:** Must occur before an employee gives any medication to a particular person. It is information about the PERSON. What are their diagnoses and health conditions? Do they have preferences about time, place or approach? How do they express discomfort or distress? Do they typically communicate if something is wrong? If so how? Do they have routines or behavioral responses that need to be considered in relationship to medication administration?

Medications need to be secured for safety: This means medications may be locked if there are reasons to support this action. Examples include potential theft or inadvertent consumption by another individual. Having someone other than the individual unlock medications does not mean that an individual cannot self-administer.

## **8 Steps towards Safe & Successful Medication Administration**

- 1) Communicate well: Confirm who is getting the prescription filled and who is administering the medication. Assure that prescriptions are picked up promptly from the pharmacy and are available to the person who is giving the medication when needed.
- 2) Check the medications: Each container from the pharmacy should be checked to assure that the medication is correct, the dosage accurate, and that the pharmacy's description of the medication matches what is in the container.
- 3) Accurately document information on the MAR: Specific follow up checking must occur to make sure the MAR information is entered correctly and medication administered properly. If the MAR and the medication container do not match, find out which is right before giving the medication to the individual.
  - unlicensed personnel are only authorized to transcribe onto the MAR from pharmacy label containers, (Except for dosage changes to current medications, or prescribed directions for over-the-counter medications).

- 4.) Assure that the correct medications are given to the correct person: If you don't know with certainty, always ask before giving a medication.
  - 5.) Secure medications appropriately: Medication theft and unplanned consumption of medications are ongoing risks that must always be assessed. Access to medications should be limited to prevent hazards or abuse. Controlled substances should be regularly accounted for.
  - 6.) Have a back up plan in place: Someone else should be prepared to give medications if the person responsible for medication administration cannot be there at the time the medication needs to be given.
  - 7.) Always assure the 5 RIGHTS for every medication: Confirming these rights will help assure that medication administration occurs without error.
- The procedures for correct medication administration can be found in the DODD Medication Administration Curriculum on the DODD website:  
<http://dodd.ohio.gov/health/masresources.htm#curriculum>

**REISSUED: July 2011**