



Medicines management newsletter Issue 2 - December 2016



Welcome to our second newsletter

This edition includes:

- Reminder: think inhalers!
- Why do Nursing homes and residential homes have different arrangements for the disposal of waste medication?

Also top tips for:

- Reducing waste of PRN (when required) medication
- Administering Bisphosphonates and Calcium supplements

Reminder about inhalers

There has been a notable increase in the number of new inhaler devices available.

It is therefore important that you ensure a resident's inhaler is sent with their medication when they attend a hospital out-patient appointment or when they are admitted to hospital. This avoids a different device being prescribed and also reduces waste.

Do you have a suggestion for an article you'd like to see in future newsletters?

Please let us know! SSSCG.Carehomereferral@nhs.net



Waste medication

Why is it that nursing homes and residential homes have different arrangements for the disposal of waste medication?



Some waste from healthcare (also called clinical waste) may prove hazardous to those that come into contact with it and is therefore subject to stringent controls (www.gov.uk)

- Nursing home medication waste is classed as 'clinical waste' and therefore requires a license agreement.
- Residential home medication waste is classed as 'household waste' and can be returned to a local pharmacy for disposal.
- For householders – in the case of pharmaceuticals (medicines etc.), the recommended means of disposal is to return them to a pharmacy.
- Further information on the controls on the disposal of waste can be found at www.gov.uk-Guidance on the correct disposal of potentially hazardous clinical waste.

Under the [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) it is unlawful to deposit, recover or dispose of controlled (including clinical) waste without a waste management licence, contrary to the conditions of a licence or the terms of an exemption, or in a way which causes pollution of the environment or harm to human health. Contravention of waste controls is a criminal offence.

[Section 34](#) of the act, places people concerned with controlled (including clinical) waste under a duty of care to ensure that the waste is managed properly, recovered or disposed of safely and is only transferred to someone who is authorised to keep it. Householders are exempt for their own household waste.

Top tips for reducing waste

When Required (PRN) medication:

- Only order what is needed.
- Check on how frequently the medication is being given and whether your resident is getting an appropriate quantity each month.
- It is not necessary to destroy unused PRN medication each month and order a new supply
- Carry forward: PRN medication that is still in use and in date should be 'carried forward' from one month to the next.



Top Tips for Administering Bisphosphonates and Calcium Supplements



- Bisphosphonate medicines help to strengthen bones and prevent them getting any weaker, reducing the chance of fractures. The most commonly prescribed bisphosphonates are Alendronic acid and Risedronate. They are usually taken once a week.
- Bisphosphonates should be taken at least half an hour (ideally 2 hours) before breakfast or any other medication or drink apart from tap water.
- Calcium supplements (which may also contain vitamin D, eg Adcal) should be taken well apart from bisphosphonates (and also after levothyroxine and iron supplements e.g. ferrous fumerate). The most conservative advice is to wait 4 hours after taking bisphosphonates before taking calcium supplements. A practical solution is to give the first calcium supplement of the day at lunchtime rather than breakfast to ensure this gap.
- Bisphosphonates should be swallowed whilst sitting upright with a full glass of water and the resident should remain upright for 30 minutes afterwards. This is because bisphosphonates can irritate the upper part of the gullet, which may cause symptoms of acid reflux or indigestion.
- It is important to maintain good oral hygiene whilst taking bisphosphonates, and also to report any jaw or thigh pain that occur whilst taking these medicines.

(Prepared by Helen Ramsbottom, Care Home Pharmacist at NHS Southport and Formby CCG 7/11/16)

If you have any questions regarding a resident who is prescribed bisphosphonates after reading this information, please contact your care home pharmacist, via the GP surgery where that resident is registered.

**Best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year from the medicines
management care home team**

