Purpose

The aim of this procedure is to provide direction and support for the safe and effective management of medications administered on a PRN (as required) basis.

Policy Statement

This policy aims to provide guidelines for Registered Nurses who administer PRN medications ordered by a doctor for a specific resident based on their clinical judgement or delegate administration to an Enrolled Nurse or a care worker who is competent in medication administration.

A PRN medication is a medication ordered and charted by a doctor for the defined treatment of intermittent symptoms or a short-term condition. PRN medications are not intended to be given as a regular dose or at specific times e.g. during a regular medication round.

Definitions

- RACF - Residential Aged Care Facility
- PRN – As required medication
- DAA – Dose Administration Aid
- RN - Registered Nurse

Scope

A Registered Nurse may administer a PRN medication based on clinical judgement or delegate administration to an Enrolled Nurse or a Care Worker who has the knowledge, skills and competence to administer medications and authorised by the facility to undertake such a role.

Procedure

Prescribing and charting a PRN medication:

Following assessment of a resident a doctor will add a PRN medication to the Primary Medication Chart. To avoid any confusion the medication order shall state:

- Sign and date the order
- Medication name, strength, formulation
- Number or quantity to be given and route of administration
- Interval between doses or number of times per day (if repeat doses are required)
- Maximum or total dose which may be given in 24 hours
- Specific reason for administering medication or the expected outcome
- Date PRN medication was started by Doctor
- The computer generated chart shall show colour images where available which identify the tablet
Supply of PRN medications:

Pharmacy will supply PRN tablets or capsules in an appropriate white Webstercare PRN pack clearly showing:

- Quality assurance check
- Expiry date
- Identification of resident including colour photo

Considerations with PRN medications:

Before a PRN medication is administered the following may be considered:

- Administration of a PRN medication is indicated when the resident is experiencing symptoms.
- The resident may be able to identify when they need medication or care staff may observe a need.
- If a resident is unable to make this decision because of cognitive or other impairment then a suitably qualified person is required to make a clinical decision. A person qualified to make this decision is a doctor or a Registered Nurse (RN).
- Where an RN delegates the administration process to a care staff member a plan is documented in the resident’s care plan or notes to clearly specify under what circumstances a PRN medication may be administered.
- Avoid variable doses if administration is by care staff to avoid the need to make clinical decisions.
- Instructions for administration must be clear and unambiguous.
- Any instructions shall take into account if there are any other medications with similar therapeutic effect or class that may result in the resident receiving too much medication (e.g. Regular medications containing paracetamol with additional PRN paracetamol, in which the dose interval and the total daily dose shall be adjusted to avoid excessive dosing).

Administration of PRN medication

- Check the Primary Medication Chart
- Locate the correct white PRN Websterpak and check expiry date. Check the date and time the last dose was administered and that the time interval is greater than the specified dose interval
- Administer the correct dose as specified on the Primary Medication Chart according to facility policies on administration of medications
- Document the date, time, quantity administered and signature on the PRN medication administration record.
- Document in resident’s notes and record response to therapy or outcome
- RN has the responsibility to monitor the outcome and to contact the GP if expected outcome is not achieved.

Review of PRN medications

- A review of PRN medications shall be part of the resident’s care plan.
• To determine the ongoing clinical need for a PRN medication as medication may be stopped or a regular dose may be needed.

**Legislation**

- State and Territory poison legislation
- Aged Care Act 1997
- Quality of Care Principles 1997, Schedule 2: Accreditation Standards
- User Rights Principles: Schedule 1 *Charter of residents’ rights and responsibilities*

**References**

- Accreditation standard 2.7 – Medication Management
- Guidelines for Medication Management in Residential Aged Care Facilities *(Australian Pharmaceutical Council 2002)*

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This Standard Operating Procedure is provided as a guide only and should be customised to suit individual facility policy and procedures.