

Pharmacy tip: Administration and recording of creams and nutritional supplements

The following applies to care homes and domiciliary care agencies.

What issues need to be considered?

- Can creams and ointments be kept in a person's room?
- Who can administer creams and ointments?
- What records should be made of the administration of creams and ointments?
- What information should be available when nutritional supplements are prescribed?
- What records should be kept?

Guidance

- In care homes creams and ointments can be kept in people's rooms. Safe and secure storage must be available and the person should be asked if they are happy for the products to be kept in their room. Some creams such as Daktacort need to be kept at fridge temperatures so are not suitable to be kept in a person's room.
- If the instructions are 'use as directed' advice should be sought from the prescriber and the information recorded on the MAR chart.
- The administration **must** be recorded. A separate MAR chart could be used and kept with the cream in the person's room.
- In care homes providing nursing the nurse in charge may delegate the task of administering creams to a member of the care staff. The carer must be trained to do so and must sign the administration record, not the nurse.
- Information should be available to ensure staff know what the cream is for, where to apply, how much to apply and for how long.
- Some people are prescribed creams such as aqueous cream to use as a soap substitute. The care plan should list these products and what they are for. A record could be made in the daily care notes to record that the cream had been used to wash the person. This would demonstrate that staff are using the cream appropriately.
- When a person is prescribed nutritional supplements the care plan must detail why they have been prescribed, how much to give, when to give and how to monitor the person's progress.
- A record must be made to demonstrate the person is getting the supplements as prescribed. This may be on the MAR chart or on a separate record sheet kept with other information on the person's progress such as daily weight checks or fluid intake. The record must show how much was given and when, as the supplement may be given at times other than the usual medicine rounds.
- A regular review of the nutritional supplements should be requested.

What kind of things will inspectors be looking for?

- Is the administration of creams, ointments and nutritional supplements clearly recorded to demonstrate they are being given as prescribed?
- Does the person's care plan clearly record why the person has been prescribed these products, how they should be given and when?

These 'Pharmacy Tips' are based on documents that were on CQC's website (now withdrawn). Providers should use this advice in conjunction with NICE guideline *Managing Medicines in Care Homes* and *The Handling of Medicines in Social Care* (RPSGB 2007) and should check CQC's website for further guidance.