

OHCPS NEWSLETTER

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Medication Error Prevention

What is a Medication Error?

The National Coordination Council for Medication Error Reporting and Prevention defines a “medication error” as follows:

***“A medication error is any preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate medication use or patient harm while the medication is in control of the healthcare professional, patient, or consumer. Such events may be related to professional practice, health care products, procedures, and systems, including prescribing, order communication, product labeling, packaging, and nomenclature, compounding, dispensing, distribution, administration, education, monitoring, and use.*”**

Factors that increase the potential for medication errors

- Illegible handwriting
- Unapproved abbreviations
- Inaccurate computer entry
- Failure to check the medication record
- Sound alike drugs
- Use of multiple tabs to supply dose
- Failure to verify patient identity
- Vague instructions “take as directed”
- Not following manufactures guidelines
- Environmental distractions
- Selecting the top choice on the drop-down menu during data entry
- Failure to check for allergies
- Not reading back directions to prescriber when taking a telephone order

Best practices for med error prevention

- Reduce environmental distraction
- Check patient identity prior to administering medications
- Triple check E-MAR/medication label for accuracy prior to administering medication
- Ask for clarification if unsure of directions
- Read back directions to prescriber when taking an order
- Use only approved abbreviations
- Use a ball point pen and write legibly
- Include all components when transcribing an order (drug, dose, route, frequency, indication for use)
- Use caution when entering an order into the computer (E-MAR)

Facility wide process improvement

Implement a facility wide tracking system to determine if there are any trends in medication errors. All appropriate staff should demonstrate competency in medication administration. OHCPS can assist with competency med pass observations and MAR reviews.

Contact your OHCPS pharmacist or nurse consultant to see how we can assist with med pass competencies.

References:

- <https://www.nccmerp.org/about-medication-errors>
- [do not use list 6 28 19.pdf \(jointcommission.org\)](#)
- Institute for Safe Medication Practices
- FDA.gov-Medication Error Reports
- <http://cms.gov-guidance-and-regulation> (F-tags)

“At OHCPS we not only promise SUPERIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE, we deliver it.”