

Administering Topical Medications

Level III

Purpose	The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for the safe administration of topical medications.
Preparation	1. Verify that there is a physician's medication order for this procedure. 2. Review the resident's care plan to assess for any special needs of the resident. 3. Assemble the equipment and supplies as needed.
General Guidelines	1. Follow the medication administration guidelines in the policy entitled <i>Administering Medications</i>.
Equipment and Supplies	The following equipment and supplies will be necessary when performing this procedure. 1. Medication Administration Record; 2. Medication cart or tray; 3. Solution or solvent for cleaning, as indicated; 4. Gauze for cleaning, as indicated; 5. Dressing, as indicated or ordered; 6. Applicator tube, as needed; 7. Tongue blade; and 8. Personal protective equipment (e.g., gowns, gloves, mask, etc., as needed).
Steps in the Procedure	1. Perform hand antisepsis by either washing with soap and water or applying alcohol-based hand rub. 2. Arrange supplies in the medication room or move the medication cart outside the resident's room. 3. Place the MAR within easy viewing distance. 4. Unlock the medication cart. 5. Select the drug from the unit dose drawer or stock supply. 6. Check the label on the medication and confirm the medication name and dose with the MAR. 7. Check the expiration date on the medication. Return any expired medications to the pharmacy. 8. Calculate the medication dose. Re-check the calculation. 9. Prepare the correct dose of medication. 10. Confirm identity of the resident. 11. Explain the procedure to the resident. 12. Place medications on the bedside table or tray. 13. Apply glove to your dominant hand. If exposure to blood or body fluids is likely, glove both hands. 14. Position the resident comfortably while providing exposure to the area to be treated. 15. Assess the area for broken skin, drainage, debris, rashes, allergic reaction, or signs of infection. 16. Remove excessive hair, if indicated. 17. Clean the skin. Remove old medication residue, debris, scales, dried blood, etc. If necessary, saturate a gauze pad with solvent and wipe in the direction of hair growth to remove paste, cream or ointment from the area.

Steps in the Procedure (continued)

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18. Don clean gloves, if necessary.
19. Apply medication:

Paste, cream, ointment, or lotion

- a. Open the container and place the tube upside down on the table surface.
- b. Apply clean gloves.
- c. Remove tongue blade from sterile wrapper.
- d. Place medication on the tongue blade and transfer to gloved hands.
- e. Warm the medication in gloved hands and apply gently to the skin in the direction of hair growth.
- f. Repeat as necessary to cover the entire area, using a new tongue blade for each application.
- g. Remove gloves. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.

Powder

- a. Clean and dry the skin surface.
- b. Sprinkle the site with a fine, thin layer of powder, spreading any folds of skin, as necessary.
- c. Remove gloves. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.

Suspension-based lotion

- a. Shake the container well to distribute all suspended particles in the solution.
- b. Apply lotion to a sterile gauze pad.
- c. Apply lotion in the direction of hair growth.
- d. Repeat with new gauze pad until entire area is covered.
- e. Remove gloves. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.

Aerosol spray

- a. Shake the container.
- b. Hold at recommended distance from affected area (typically 6 to 12 inches).
- c. Cover the resident's face with a towel if spraying the head or neck.
- d. Apply spray evenly to affected area.
- e. Remove gloves. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.

Trans-dermal patches

- a. Clean and dry a selected area that is approved for application of the patch. Rotate sites with each new application, if possible.
- b. Remove old patch.
- c. Remove wrapper from the patch. Do not touch the adhesive surface.
- d. Apply to the skin, pressing firmly for approximately ten (10) seconds.
- e. Remove gloves. Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
20. Don gloves and apply sterile dressing, as necessary.
21. Discard all disposable items into designated containers.
22. Perform hand antisepsis.
23. Reposition the bed covers. Make the resident comfortable.
24. Place the call light within easy reach of the resident.
25. If the resident desires, return the door and curtains to the open position and if visitors are waiting, tell them that they may now enter the room.

Documentation

Follow documentation guidelines in the procedure entitled *Documentation of Medication Administration*.

Reporting

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1. Notify the supervisor if the resident refuses the procedure.
2. Report other information in accordance with facility policy and professional standards of practice.

References	
MDS (RAPs)	I1; I2; I3; J1; J2; J4; J5; O1; O2; O4; P8; (16)
Survey Tag Numbers	F329–F333; F425
Related Documents	Administering Medications Documentation of Medication Administration
Risk of Exposure	Blood–Body Fluids–Infectious Diseases–Air Contaminants–Hazardous Chemicals
Procedure Revised	Date: _____ By: _____ Date: _____ By: _____ Date: _____ By: _____ Date: _____ By: _____

