Administering Oral Medications

Level III

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for the safe administration of oral 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.

Assemble the equipment and supplies as needed.

General Guidelines

Follow the medication administration guidelines in the policy entitled *Administering Medications*.

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. Disposable medication cups;
4. Disposable drinking cups;
5. Water pitcher;
6. Drinking straws;
7. Pill-crushing device, if needed; and
8. Pill-cutting device, if needed.

Steps in the Procedure

1. Wash your hands.
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. Check the medication dose. Re-check to confirm the proper dose.
9. Prepare the correct dose of medication:
    a. For **liquid medications**. Remove the cap from the bottle and place cap upside down on the work surface. Hold the medication cup at eye level and use your thumb to mark the desired level on the cup. Fill to the bottom of the meniscus at the desired level. Place cup on a level surface and read the poured amount at eye level to check accuracy.
    b. For **narcotics**. Check the narcotic record for the previous drug count and compare with the supply on hand. Report any discrepancies to the nurse supervisor.
    c. For **powdered medications**. Mix with liquids at the bedside.
    d. For **effervescent medications**. Dissolve immediately before administration.

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Steps in the Procedure (continued)

e. For **tablets or capsules from a bottle**. Pour the desired number into the bottle cap and transfer to the medication cup. Do not touch the medication with your hands. Return extra capsules/tablets to the bottle. All medications to be given at the same time can be placed in the same cup except those that require assessment (e.g., vital signs) prior to administration.
f. For **unit dose tablets or capsules**. Place packaged medications directly into the medication cup.

10. Confirm the identity of the resident.
11. Explain the procedure to the resident.
12. Place medications on the bedside table or tray.
13. Perform any pre-administration assessments.
14. Assist the resident to a sitting or side lying position.
15. Offer water to assist the resident in swallowing medications.
16. Allow the resident to swallow **oral tablets or capsules** at his or her comfortable pace.
17. If the resident can not hold his or her own medications, place the cup near the lips and gently introduce each medicine one at a time, followed by a sip of water. Do not rush the resident.
18. Instruct the resident to place **sublingual medications** under the tongue and allow the drug to dissolve.
19. Instruct the resident to place **buccal medications** against either cheek and allow the drug to dissolve.
20. If a medication falls to the floor, discard and document per facility protocol. Repeat the preparation.
21. Remain with the resident until all medications have been taken.
22. Discard all disposable items into designated containers.
23. Perform hand antisepsis.
24. Reposition the bed covers. Make the resident comfortable.
25. Place the call light within easy reach of the resident.
26. 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

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 (11; 17)
Survey Tag Numbers	F329; F332; 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:_____

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