

Authorisation and Administration Instructions for the Alteration of a Medicine Formulation in a Care Setting

Tablets and capsules are the most commonly prescribed formulations of medicine. Residents with swallowing difficulties, is however, a common problem within care homes. Residents who have problems swallowing or those who are fed via feeding tubes (e.g. nasogastric (NG), nasojejunal (NJ) or percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tubes) cannot use tablets or capsules in their whole solid form. When administering medication via feeding tubes (PEG, NG, NJ) several issues need to be considered. If medicines are given via the feeding tubes without the correct advice: drug bioavailability may be altered; tubes may become occluded or drugs may bind to the feeding tube. Before giving medicines via feeding tubes **always obtain advice from a pharmacist, prescriber or the patient's specialist care team.**

In a care setting, there may be a need to identify alternative ways of giving solid oral dose formulations and consideration must be given to the consequences of manipulating formulations. In these circumstances, medication may need to be administered off-licence e.g. crushing or opening solid dose forms. (NB Medication must never be administered covertly to patients without appropriate prior assessment as noted in CQC guidance. <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/covert-administration-medicines>)

Incorrect crushing of medication is a common source of medication error in a care setting. Prescription medications should only be taken according to the directions of a prescriber. Medicines used in a different way from that which the manufacturers have stated would be considered off-licence use, in these circumstances the manufacturer would not accept responsibility or liability for any harm caused by the medicine. A person giving crushed tablets or the contents of an opened capsule to a patient without directions from the prescriber and without making the appropriate checks could be held liable for any harm caused.

Considerations:

- Consider is the medication essential? It might, in some instances, be more appropriate to stop therapy, either temporarily or long term. Before stopping any medication, however, the prescriber should always be contacted.
- Consider whether the medication can be given in a different licensed formulation. For example dispersible/soluble tablets, liquid preparations, patches which can be applied to the skin, suppositories or injections. This information can be found in the British National Formulary (BNF), but a pharmacist or prescriber should always be consulted as changes to the amount of medicine or how often it is given may need to be made.

- **In some cases a different medicine could be prescribed that does not need to be swallowed whole or is available as an alternative formulation.**
- Consider a specials formulation (**These formulations can be very expensive and there may be suitable alternatives advice must be sought form a Community/Practice Pharmacist prior to request a specials formulation**). These are unlicensed medicines that do not have a UK or European marketing authorisation.

Before a person crushes tablets or opens capsules to administer to a patient, a pharmacist should always be consulted to find out if this is possible and this should be approved by the prescriber. Specific administration instructions must be clearly noted on the patients care plan and their medication profile.

Further guidance:

Specialist Pharmacy Services QA Nov 2018 [What are the considerations when crushing tablets or opening capsules in a care home setting?](#)

AUTHORISATION AND ADMINISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ALTERING OF A MEDICATION FORMULATION IN A CARE HOME SETTING

This form must not be used for covert administration of medication

Patient Details

Name:

D.OB:

Name of care provider:

Does this patient have swallowing difficulties: Y/N

Feeding tube in situ (PEG/NG/NJ): Y/N

If yes please specify:

Medicine authorised for alteration of formulation including drug name, strength and formulation:	Specific formulation change directions: i.e. crush/open capsules/dissolve	Directions for administration of medication:

Has advice been sought from a suitable qualified Health care Professional e.g. Pharmacist/Pharmacy Technician – Y/N

If applicable has advice been sought from a specialist if the resident has a feeding tube in situ – Y/N

Give details of references used to support medicine formulation change and directions (e.g. NEWT Guidelines):

Authorisation details:

I hereby authorise the above medicine(s) formulation to be altered prior to administration and accept that in doing so I am giving permission for it to be used in an unlicensed manner.

Name of authorising GP (please print).....

Signature of authorising GP

Date of authorisation

Please ensure a regular review is completed (at least annually or when any medication changes are made).

Document Control Sheet

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