

# Coronavirus Contingency - Safe Administration of Medicines from Original Packs in Care Homes - March 2020

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, community pharmacies are becoming overwhelmed. As a result, you may now receive medicines for your care home residents in original packs, rather than blister packs.

To ensure you are aware of how to safely administer medicines this way, it is essential that ALL staff who administer medicines have read and understood this information sheet.

## Q How should I store the medicines?

A It is best if medicines for a particular person are stored together.

- TIP:** Often care homes use separate containers to store each person's medicines in. This keeps all the medicines for one person together. These must then be locked away.
- TIP:** Make sure any medicines that need cold storage are placed in the medicines fridge and any Controlled Drugs (CDs) are locked in the Controlled Drug cupboard and a record made in the CD register.

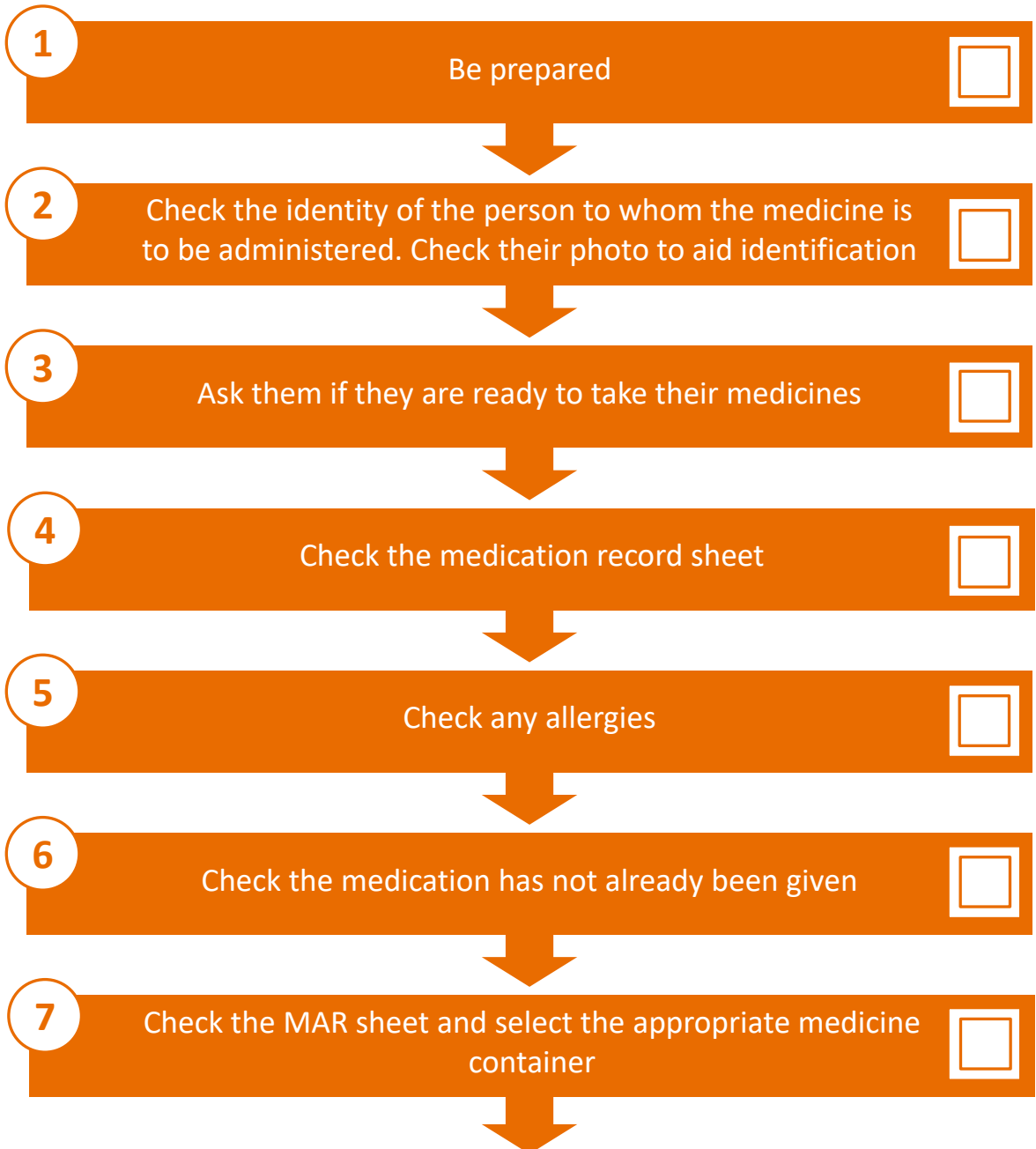
## Q What is the difference between administering medicines from original packs compared to blister packs?

A You may have got into the habit of simply selecting the medicine from the appropriate section of the blister pack when you were administering from the MDS (monitored dosage system) without fully reading all the important details.

It will now be a case of using best practice EVERY time you administer. This means you MUST read the label very carefully for each medicine and check each detail on the label against the information on the MAR sheet. The details MUST agree before you can administer the medicine.

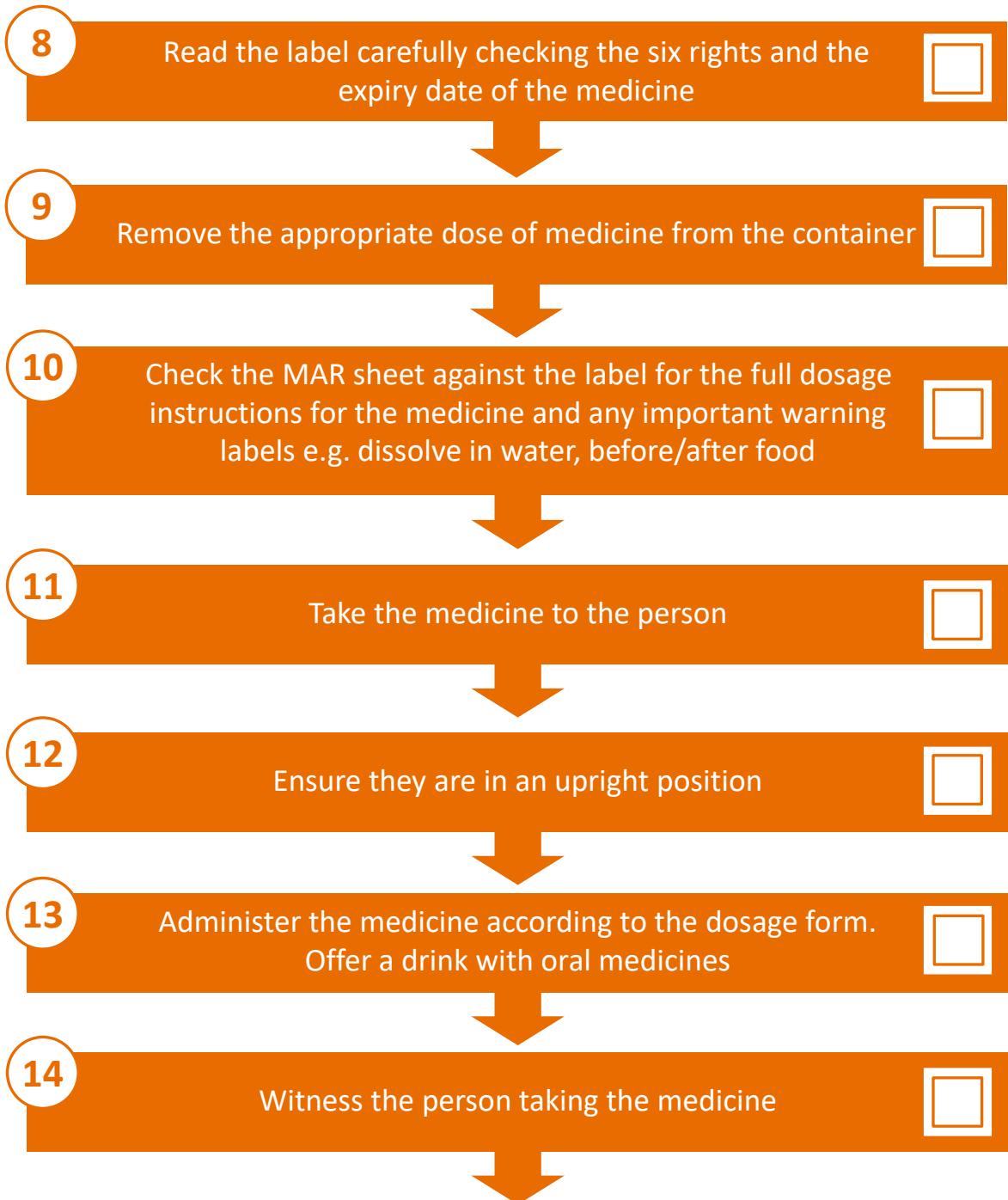
You must use the following procedure EVERY time you administer a medicine.

# Procedure for the Administration of Medicines from Original Packs



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## Procedure for the Administration of Medicines from Original Packs

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Record the administration of the medicines **IMMEDIATELY** by initialling the correct date space on the MAR sheet



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If the medicine is not administered for any reason e.g. refused, then write the appropriate code on the MARS and write further details on the back of the MAR



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Proceed to the next person/medicine

**Q**

How should I administer?

**A**

To make sure no medicines are forgotten, it is best to administer the medicines in the order they appear on the MAR sheet. If you work down the MAR sheet in a systematic order, you will be less likely to make a mistake.



**TIP:** Be aware there may be more than one MAR sheet for each person.



**TIP:** Always follow the correct procedure and remember to double check the medicine label against the MAR sheet paying particular attention to the 6 Rights- i.e. you are giving the right person, the right medicine, at the right dose, at the right time, using the right route and bearing in mind the person has the right to refuse.

## Q Where are the particular areas of risk?

A There are many areas of risk with administering medicines. Here are a few of the common ones:

- When you administer tablets from a manufacturer's blister pack, make sure you take the strip of tablets out of the box, check the back of the strip to make sure the name of the medicine printed on it corresponds with the name of the medicine on the label, pop out the tablet into a medicine pot and then replace the strip back into the box straight away.
- You must make sure you only administer one medicine at a time and replace the strip of medicines back into the box immediately. This will reduce the likelihood of you replacing the wrong strip of medicines into the wrong box.
- When you pop tablets or capsules out of a manufacturer's original pack, select the tablet in a consecutive order (i.e. use the pack as if it were a day marked pack) and not just randomly. This will ensure you don't get left with all sorts of odd tablets in amongst the empty popped blister strips and will make auditing much easier and will reduce the likelihood of error.
- Where medicines have been dispensed by the pharmacy into plain tablet boxes, you must be particularly careful to avoid error.

**TIP:** Only administer one medicine at a time.

- Be careful of medicines that have the same name but different strengths e.g. medicines for Parkinson's or epilepsy - often people might be taking a combination of different strengths at different times of day.

## Q Will it take longer to administer medicines using original packs?

A Yes, to start with, as you need to get used to checking every single detail on the label against the MAR sheet for each medicine, one point at a time. Like most things, the process will speed up as you get used to doing it. There are no short cuts.

Make sure you remember and use the 6 rights when you administer.

## 6 Rights of Administration

- |   |                       |   |                        |
|---|-----------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Right <b>PERSON</b>   | 4 | Right <b>TIME</b>      |
| 2 | Right <b>MEDICINE</b> | 5 | Right <b>ROUTE</b>     |
| 3 | Right <b>DOSE</b>     | 6 | Right <b>TO REFUSE</b> |

**Q** How should I record the administration of medicines?

**A** You must record on the MAR sheet whenever you administer a medicine so this should be no different to what you have been doing before. It must be obvious which medicines have been given, when they were given and by whom. The MAR sheet must be an accurate record of all medicines that have been received into the home, those administered and those refused and you must have a record of which medicines have been returned.

**Q** Do I need to be trained to administer medicines?

**A** **REMEMBER** - Make sure staff are fully trained and have been assessed as competent before they administer medicines.

The information in this leaflet does not cover all aspects of medicines handling. See page 8 of this information leaflet for suggestions for managing training through this difficult period.

## 5 Top Tips for Medicines Handling

1 Make sure you are familiar with the medicines policy

2 Make sure all details are in the care / support plan

3 Read the MAR sheet and medicine label carefully

4 Understand the procedures where you work

5 If in doubt, check it out!



# Medication Training - Coronavirus Contingency Plan



## The Challenges

- Staff are self-isolating or being quarantined due to the coronavirus outbreak meaning changes to the workforce
- The Government is advising people to:
  - Avoid travel
  - Avoid group face to face contact
- Medicines training is still required for staff to ensure they are competent in administering medicines and for the organisation to remain compliant
- More staff need training, quickly and effectively for the frontline

## Who Needs Training?

- New staff requiring induction training
- Staff who are being deployed into other areas of the business to cope with demand
- Staff who may be drafted in but have not had recent medicines training
- Staff whose medicines training certificate has expired/is expiring shortly

## Why Online Learning and Competency Assessment?

- Accredited courses are available for completion anywhere including, at home, at work or wherever your staff are self-isolating or in quarantine
- Very fast licence set up
- Managers can hold a bank of licences ready to deploy to staff as soon as they are needed
- Certificates produced immediately upon successful completion of training assessment
- Ask the Pharmacist feature to answer any questions

## How Do We Get Started?

- Just let us know the number of licences you need and the social care setting you work in and we can set the licences up for you
- We will send you log in details

Staff members are now ready to go into the service with the knowledge skills and competence from an accredited and reputable source without needing to travel or have group face to face contact with others.

## The Outcome

**The Solution:** Follow the 3-Step Process to get staff ready for action

Safe Handling of Medicines Foundation  
e-learning (1.5 - 2 hours)

**TRAIN** + Gain knowledge

Shadow/witness in service

**SHADOW** - See how it is done  
in your place of work

Competency assess online (30 minutes)

**TEST** - Demonstrate you are  
doing it correctly

**Train - Shadow - Test and Go!**

NB Staff are able to complete distance learning workbooks where learners don't have access to a computer/the internet

**Will I Be Supported?**

In addition, we provide support for all your questions and queries about medicines. Just email us at [info@opuspharmserve.com](mailto:info@opuspharmserve.com) or call us on 0333 939 0053 and one of our Pharmacist team will be able to help you. These may be challenging times, but we need to work together as a community to keep both the people we support and the staff, safe and healthy. We are here to help you.

**Contact Us Anytime**

☎ 0333 939 0053  
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🌐 [www.opuspharmserve.com](http://www.opuspharmserve.com)

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