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Updated advice - 'BLMK ICB Expiry Dates for Medication' guidance

You may recall from our last newsletter [Edition 9: January 2023](#) we covered an article on 'Missing 'dates of opening' on medication'. This was following an incident involving a resident who was discharged from hospital into a residential home.

As a result, we have now added the information below into our guidance to support the homes with such incidences and to prevent medication waste:

Hospital discharge and new admissions:

- If a 'date of opening' is not recorded on certain medicines (e.g., eye drops, liquids, creams etc.) following a resident's discharge from a hospital, a different care setting or if a new admission from own home, it would be reasonable for care home staff to use the 'date of dispensing' on the pharmacy label as the assumed 'date of opening'. The 'date of dispensing' should be marked or highlighted on the box so other staff are also aware that this is the assumed 'date of opening'. This is provided that the medicine has been checked as appropriate to use (e.g., in good condition, within manufacturer's expiry date, clearly labelled with dose directions etc.). In this situation, action taken should be recorded in the resident's care plan
- Care homes may wish to include the above advice as part of their medicines reconciliation process within their care homes medicines policy for when residents are admitted to their home
- If there is any uncertainty about whether a product is safe to use, please contact your community pharmacist for advice

Our updated 'Expiry Dates for Medication guidance' can be found on our website page:

[Good Practice Guidance for Care Homes – Expiry Dates for Medication – BLMKICB Medicines Management](#)

Updated BLMK ICB Homely Remedies toolkit and First Dressing Scheme

The BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation team have reviewed and updated the Homely Remedies Toolkit for all care homes, and the First Dressing Scheme which is for use in nursing homes only. The updated versions can now be accessed via our care homes website page:

[Care Homes Homely Remedies – BLMKICB Medicines Management](#)

The main changes in the Homely Remedies toolkit are listed below:

- Additional information explaining the differences between Homely Remedies and Self-Care, with new table added in Appendix 2
- **Removal of Hydrocortisone cream** from product list as sits better under 'Self-Care' and we now have the [Self-Care toolkit](#) to support with this
- **Addition of Gaviscon® Advance chewable tablets as well as the suspension.**
- In product information boxes - updated links to manufacturers information (e.g., SPC) and additional cautions added
- In flowcharts for each minor ailment – added doses for each product
- Appendix 5 – New 'Guide to implementing homely remedies in a care home' includes 'Process for implementation of Homely Remedies Toolkit in Care Homes' and 'Process for Administration of Homely Remedies in the Care Home'
- Appendix 6 – New 'Flowchart for administration of Homely Remedies'
- Updated references e.g., added link to PrescQIPP Bulletin on Homely remedies

The main changes in the First Dressings Scheme for Nursing homes are listed below:

- Updated link added to the Beds & Luton CCGs JPC Wound Formulary
- Updated formulary choices of dressings for each wound type
- Added link to useful resource on 'SKKIN bundle – prevention & management and Heel Prevention' via wound formulary

***Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about the updated guidance.
Our contact details can found at the end of this newsletter***

New BLMK ICB Falls poster and patient leaflet

Falls and fall-related injuries are a common and a serious problem for older people. Whilst there can be many contributing factors, the use of certain medications is recognised as a major and modifiable risk factor for falls. The Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team have recently produced some updated guidance (links below) which care homes may find useful to support residents in the management of falls, with regards to medication.

[Medication and the Risk of Falls in Older People](#)

This guidance includes common medication classes associated with falls and is used to support healthcare staff in the management of Fall-Risk-Increasing Drugs (FRIDs). The guidance is useful for clinicians carrying out medication reviews, and offers advice on when withdrawal may be considered, as well as suggested monitoring post-withdrawal.

[A Guide to Reducing the Risk of Falls due to Medication in Older People](#)

This document is an easy-to-read guide for patients to support them to reduce their risk of falls associated with medication. It includes a list of classes of medicines that are associated with falls, highlighting the possible problems with each group of medicine. Additionally, it covers practical tips on reducing the risk of falls and highlights the benefits of having regular medication reviews.

COVID-19 - Important guidance links for care homes

During these continually challenging times we are conscious that guidance is constantly changing and you may be receiving a lot of information from various sources. For this reason we have produced links (below) to a few of the key guidance documents:

[Infection prevention and control in adult social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/infection-prevention-and-control-in-adult-social-care-settings)

[Infection prevention and control in adult social care: COVID-19 supplement - *New updates*](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): adult social care action plan](#)

[Spring 2023 COVID-19 vaccination programme: JCVI advice, 22 February 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

New BLMK Stoma Prescription Service

Do you have a stoma or care for residents who have a stoma?

A new NHS Stoma Prescription Service is being launched across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) on 1st June 2023. The service is designed to ensure people living with a stoma receive expert care when ordering stoma products. People living with a stoma who are registered with a GP practice in the BLMK area will be able to use the new service.

BLMK GP surgeries will no longer need to manage stoma prescriptions and instead a company called **'Bullen Healthcare'** have been commissioned by BLMK ICB to provide the service. The service will be staffed by trained call handlers and stoma prescribing nurses. The care patients receive from their own local hospital stoma nurse will remain the same.

Care homes who care for residents who have a stoma will receive a welcome call from 'Bullen Healthcare' about the new service and how it works. From 1st June any orders for stoma products can be placed over the phone directly with 'Bullen Healthcare' who will send the prescription to the nominated dispensing pharmacy. **For more information about this new service and the ordering process please refer to the links below:**

[BLMK-SPS-Patient-Information-Leaflet.pdf \(icb.nhs.uk\)](#)

[BLMK AMPS – Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Appliance Management Prescription Service \(blmkstomaprescriptionservice.nhs.uk\)](#)

Pholcodine-containing cough and cold medicines: withdrawal

Pholcodine-containing cough and cold medicines are being withdrawn from sale as a precaution and will no longer be available from pharmacies.

There is evidence that using pholcodine-containing medicines leads to an increased risk of the very rare event of an allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) in patients who receive general anaesthesia involving neuromuscular blocking agents (NMBAs) during surgery.

If you or any of your residents are currently taking or have taken a pholcodine-containing cough or cold medicine in the past 12 months and are scheduled to have surgery which includes the use general anaesthesia, then please inform the anaesthetist before the surgery is due.

If you have any questions, you can also talk to your local community pharmacist who could also suggest a different medicine if needed. The full Drug Safety Update can be viewed via the link below:

[Pholcodine-containing cough and cold medicines: withdrawal from UK market as a precautionary measure - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Medication Training for Adult Social Care

The BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team are pleased to announce a new training scheme for all adult social care staff involved in the administration of medication.

The training offer follows a tiered system:

Tier 1 – Foundation knowledge, delivered via eLearning.

BLMK ICB are pleased to offer the following eLearning modules, hosted by PrescQIPP (a Skills for Care Endorsed Provider). The courses support the implementation of recommendations in the NICE guideline SC1 (Managing medicines in care homes) / NICE guideline 67 (Managing medicines for adults receiving social care in the community) and carry a NICE endorsement statement.

- **Medicines use in care homes: course 1** – the role of CQC, the management of medicines in care homes, topical products, 'when required' medicines and more.
- **Medicines use in care homes: course 2** – refused and omitted doses, covert administration, controlled drugs, homely remedies, waste and more.
- **Medicines use in care homes: course 3** – the use of 'high risk' medicines that require specific consideration and/or administration techniques.
- **Managing medicines for adults receiving social care in the community: course 1** – focusing on the medicine-related processes which social care providers need to consider in relation to medicines use.
- **Managing medicines for adults receiving social care in the community: course 2** – focusing on the practical issues relating to the provision of medicines administration support by social care providers.

See our [ASC Medication Training – Tier 1 Flyer](#) for more information, including access codes.

Please also see our [PrescQIPP Logon Guide](#) for instructions on how to register for the PrescQIPP training.

Tier 2 – Focussing on selected topics and local guidance/policies.

The BLMK ICB Care Home Medicines Optimisation Team are pleased to facilitate the following online medication training sessions, for all adult social care (ASC) staff, delivered via MS Teams.

Homely Remedies & Self-Care	Tuesday 23 rd May, 14:30 –15:30
When Required (PRN) Medication	Wednesday 12 th July 2023, 14:30 – 15:30
Covert Administration of Medication	Tuesday 12 th September 2023, 14:30 – 15:30
Medicines Reconciliation & Transfers of Care	Wednesday 15 th November 2023, 14:30 – 15:30
Controlled Drugs (CDs) & Regulations in Care Homes	Tuesday 23 rd January 2024, 14:30 – 15:30
Medication Safety, Governance & Safeguarding	Wednesday 13 th March 2024, 14:30 – 15:30

See our [ASC Medication Training – Tier 2 Flyer](#) for more information, including how to book and MS Teams links

Other Information:

- The Tier 1 & Tier 2 training is available to **ALL** adult social care staff involved in medication (residential, nursing, learning disability, community-based care etc.)
- The training offer has been funded by BLMK ICB/Health Education England and is therefore **free to access**
- Certificates are issued upon successful completion of each eLearning module and certificates of attendance will be issued following each Tier 2 virtual session.
- We recommend that ALL ASC staff involved in the administration of medication complete Tier 1 and Tier 2 training.

***We hope you take up this fantastic opportunity to participate in this medication training.
If you have any queries, please get in touch with your local team.***

Administration of Medicines in Care Homes: Adrenaline auto-injectors

What is anaphylaxis? Anaphylaxis is a severe and potentially life-threatening reaction to a trigger such as an allergy. Anaphylaxis usually develops suddenly and gets worse very quickly. It is a medical emergency and can be very serious if not treated quickly.

Triggers of anaphylaxis - Common anaphylaxis triggers include foods, medicines, insect stings or bites, and latex, although in some cases there is no obvious trigger. If a trigger has been identified, steps should be taken to avoid it in the future wherever possible.

Symptoms of anaphylaxis - Symptoms of anaphylaxis include feeling lightheaded or faint, breathing difficulties, wheezing, fast heartbeat, clammy skin, collapsing, as well as other symptoms including an itchy raised rash or swelling.

Adrenaline auto-injectors are prescribed for people with potentially serious allergies who may be at risk of anaphylaxis. They can help stop an anaphylactic reaction becoming life threatening. The most common adrenaline auto-injectors are [Emerade®](#), [EpiPen®](#) and [Jext®](#).

How to administer Adrenaline auto-injectors

Each adrenaline auto-injector has a specific method of administration, and this differs between brands. Care home staff must be trained on the specific brand prescribed for the individual under their care. The links below provide clear instructions and information for each brand.

Emerade® - [find out how to use Emerade](#),

EpiPen® - [find out how to use an EpiPen](#)

Jext® - [find out how to use Jext](#)

How to support a resident who has been prescribed an Adrenaline auto-injector

A clear patient-centred care plan should be in place for the use of the adrenaline auto-injectors.

The care plan should include:

- Details on the individual's trigger/s and/or allergy/allergies
- Details about which auto-injector has been prescribed and where it is kept
- Instructions on how to administer the Adrenaline auto-injector
- Information on what effect the Adrenaline should have and within what time frame
- Information on the symptoms of anaphylaxis
- A clear procedure on what to do in the case of suspected anaphylaxis
 - ⇒ Use the Adrenaline auto-injector immediately
 - ⇒ Call 999 immediately informing them of suspected anaphylaxis
 - ⇒ Remove any trigger if possible
 - ⇒ Lie the person down and raise their legs, unless they need to sit up to breathe
 - ⇒ Give another injection after 5 minutes if not improved

Other practical advice for Care homes regarding Adrenaline auto-injectors

- Make sure there are always 2 adrenaline auto-injectors in stock for the individual
- Check the auto-injectors are in date - replace before the expiry date
- Make sure all medication trained staff have additional training on how to administer prescribed adrenaline auto-injectors and have regular refresher training
- Order a training device from the manufacturers to support staff training
- Have procedures in place to ensure the prescribed adrenaline always accompanies the individual when away from the care home setting

Useful resources

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/> and [Adrenaline auto-injectors: reminder for prescribers to support safe and effective use - GOV.UK](#)

'Observation of Medication Round' by BLMK ICB Care home team

In our [October 2022 \(Edition 8\) newsletter](#) you may recall we included an article explaining our BLMK ICB Medication Quality Audit checklist for care homes visits.

Our team have now developed an 'Observation of Medication Round Checklist'. This has been designed using the same format as the current Medication Quality Audit Checklist and is intended to be used in conjunction with the audit checklist. As part of the Medication Quality visit, a pharmacy technician from our team will aim to observe a portion of the morning or afternoon medication round for a minimum of 45 minutes. A full medication round would be observed if the home is under serious concerns or requiring heightened monitoring.

The 'observation of a medication round' is not intended to be used to shadow a specific member of staff or to assess their competency. The aim of the observation is to ensure the process of administering medicines in the care home is safe, efficient and with minimal medication waste. It will be an opportunity to support staff in dealing with any medicines related problems a resident may be having (e.g., compliance issues, side-effects etc).

We would like to reassure staff being observed that we are not inspecting them and are there to support and improve processes, so would like them to feel as relaxed as possible and not be nervous about our visit. We would like the staff member to conduct their medication round as they would under normal circumstances.

During our observation of the medication round we will focus on the areas below:

- Medication round preparation and Hygiene/Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)
- Selection and preparation of medication
- Consent and additional checks prior to administration
- Administration of medication
- Record Keeping
- Interruptions to staff administering medication
- Final steps of medication round

We will provide feedback on the day of the visit and any written advice and guidance will be documented on our 'Observation of Medication Round Checklist' form with a summary of recommendations and then sent to the home for their follow up and action. Our reports may also be used as evidence for any CQC inspections. The pharmacy technician can also provide targeted training to care home staff around all or certain aspects of medicines management, as identified through the quality audit and observation of the medication round.

We hope that our care homes will find our visits valuable and the information we provide useful.

Contact us:

Bedfordshire team: Email: blmkicb.bedsnocarehometeam@nhs.net

Luton team: Email: blmkicb.lutoncarehometeam@nhs.net

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