



## What can you do to reduce waste?

Did you know that as much as **£3million** is wasted each year in Plymouth alone on unused medicines! This could pay for: 4,010 cataract operations, 1,585 knee replacements, 549 hip replacements, 333 heart by-pass operations.

There are many reasons behind the large quantities of waste medicines but if we all work together we can help to reduce this.

A recent audit of medicines returned to pharmacies from care homes highlighted large quantities of the following:

- ◆ Pain killers, both in boxes and from blister packs
- ◆ Laxatives e.g. senna, Movicol<sup>®</sup>, Laxido<sup>®</sup>
- ◆ Antacids e.g. Peptac<sup>®</sup> liquid
- ◆ Inhalers e.g. Seretide<sup>®</sup>, tiotropium inhalation capsules
- ◆ Dressings and appliances e.g. catheters and drainage bags
- ◆ Calcium preparations e.g. Adcal<sup>®</sup>, Calcichew<sup>®</sup>
- ◆ Ferrous sulphate tablets
- ◆ Warfarin
- ◆ GTN sprays
- ◆ Blood glucose test strips
- ◆ Medication returned with the reason "medication now in blister pack".

### Could any of this have been avoided?

#### What can you do to help?

##### Care homes:

- ✓ Have a robust ordering system and checking process to ensure that you only order those items that will be needed during the following month.
- ✓ Clearly mark with a tick against items you require.
- ✓ "As required" medicines will often last more than a month – check all stock areas before re-ordering.
- ✓ If "as required" medication is in the monthly blister packs, consider requesting medication in boxes so it can continue to be used into the next cycle.
- ✓ Make sure you request appropriate quantities of "as required" medicines e.g. laxatives: order suitable quantity for estimated use.
- ✓ Don't forget dressings and catheters – check stock levels are appropriate before ordering.
- ✓ Two of the most commonly returned items were calcium and iron preparations. If a patient is not taking their medicines, refer to the GP for advice.



- ✓ Warfarin: Only order the strengths of warfarin that are required for the current dose e.g. very few people need 5mg tablets.
- ✓ Unused medicines do not have to be returned at the end of each monthly cycle.
- ✓ Use up all the medication from original packs before changing to blister packs.
- ✓ At the end of each month, look at any excess/waste medicines, reflect on why this has occurred and what action you could have taken to prevent it.

##### GP practices:

- ✓ Only generate prescriptions for items that are ticked.
- ✓ Warfarin: Only generate prescriptions for the strengths of warfarin that are required e.g. very few people need 5mg tablets.
- ✓ Where care homes have requested to change the quantity required, please review and amend accordingly where appropriate.

##### Pharmacies:

- ✓ Review with the care home how to dispense "as required" medication.
- ✓ If you see large amounts of waste don't just ignore it – talk to the care home and see if you can support them to reduce the amount produced.

We all have a responsibility to ensure NHS money is not wasted. By keeping the quantity of unused medicines to a minimum you can make your contribution.

We would like to work with a sample of care homes to identify ways of reducing waste and then share these findings with everybody. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Lynn Bailey on 01752 434870.

## The most expensive medicine is the one that is never taken!

# Launch of the revised Care Home Self Assessment Tool

The Care Home Steering Group are pleased to announce the launch of the revised care home self assessment tool. This tool has been designed to provide care homes with support, guidance and suggested evidence towards demonstrating compliance with Care Quality Commission Outcome 9: Management of Medicines.

Completion is not compulsory, however, we would encourage all care homes to complete the self-assessment. It will provide a useful resource to prompt review, reflection and action in various areas regarding medication within the care home.

The tool is divided into three parts:

**1. Care home self assessment:** Identifies general policies, procedures and systems that should be in place. To be repeated at least annually.

9A - Providing personalised care through the effective use of medicines					
Equality and Diversity	Green	Amber	Red	Suggested evidence	Action required
The care home ensures all medicines are appropriate and person-centred taking in to account age, choices, lifestyle, cultural & religious beliefs, allergies & intolerances, existing medical conditions & prescriptions, adverse drug reactions & recommended regimes.				Provide evidence of any adaptations made to take into account cultural & religious beliefs.	
A written policy is in place for recording and checking allergy status				Policy in place, reviewed and audited.	
Drug rounds provide flexibility with timings to meet the needs of the service user (e.g. medication either with food or on an empty stomach).				Provide evidence of variable drug round timings.	
The registered manager seeks information and advice from a pharmacist regarding medicines dispensed for individuals in the home.				Examples of advice in care records. An intervention book may be used to record advice given.	

**2. Three individual audits:**

- Medication Administration Record Chart Audit
- Storage of Medicines Audit
- Controlled Drugs Audit

Provides snapshot evidence of compliance with policies, procedures and systems. To be repeated monthly.

**3. Action plan:** Provides a framework to implement change and improve any areas that have not demonstrated compliance with the standards. Care homes are reminded that this tool is designed as an additional resource and does not replace any other assessments or audits required by external organisations.

We hope you find this tool useful and would appreciate any feedback you may have on its design or use.

## Complan® Shake

Complan® Shake is a milk based nutritional supplement and has been added to the Plymouth Area Joint Formulary as a first line choice after fortifying food where appropriate.

Dietary advice should always be offered in the first instance to patients who have unplanned weight loss. They should be encouraged to increase food intake by having regular meals and extra snacks. If appropriate, sip feeds may then be introduced to supplement, not replace, the diet.

Complan® Shake comes in a powder sachet and, when made up with whole milk, provides a similar nutritional content to other milk based products like Ensure Plus®, Fresubin Energy®, Fortisip® and Resource Energy®.

**The Medicines Management Team are carrying out an audit across GP practices in Plymouth to highlight patients who may be suitable for switching to Complan® Shake. Care homes may notice some of their service users being switched to this product.**

## Communication form in action!

Twelve months ago the Care Home Steering Group implemented the use of the GP surgery to care home communication form. This form was designed as a tool to ensure clear messages were transferred between the GP practice, the care home and the pharmacy to help reduce the possibility of medication errors.

We have had extremely positive feedback from care homes and GP surgeries alike and it is evident that the form is being used across the city.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their cooperation and support with this area of work and we look forward to your continuing support.

