

## Section IV

When you are finished with this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the principles of medication administration (p 2)
- Describe the principles of infection control: hand washing (p 3)
- Demonstrate the 5 steps to clean hands (p 4)
- List the “Six Rights” of medication administration (p 5)

## Principles of Medication Administration

When you give medications, regardless of the type of medication, there are some **basic principles** that you will always follow. The **basic principles** that you will always follow are:

- Talk with the individual and **explain** what you are doing before you give medications. Answer any questions that the individual has.
- **Help** the individual to be as involved as possible in the process.
- **Provide privacy** for the individual.
- Give medication administration your **complete attention**.
  - Give medications in a quiet area, free from distractions.
  - Never leave medications unattended, even for a moment!
- **Wash your hands!** You must wash your hands before giving medications and then again after you have given medication to each individual.



**Remember:** if you have a question or a concern, you should **always**  and call for help!

## Principles of Infection Control: Handwashing

The single most important thing you can do to safeguard the health of others and yourself is wash your hands---and do it a lot!



How many times per day do you and the individuals that you support need to wash your hands?

### We all need to wash our hands:

- When we arrive at work
- After going to the bathroom
- Before, during and after meal preparation
- Before eating
- After blowing our nose, sneezing or coughing
- After providing personal care
- After gardening, housework
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before and after administering medications to an individual
- First thing in the morning and last thing at night

**Effective handwashing is proven to decrease spread of colds and flu and to reduce overall infection rates. Handwashing with soap and water is the most sensible way to make sure that your hands are clean**

You may also use an **alcohol-based hand rub** in place of soap and water.





Source: [www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/images/clean-hands.jpg](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/images/clean-hands.jpg)

When you are giving some types of medications, it is necessary to wear gloves.



Change your gloves as soon as you have finished administering medications to the individual. Never re-use gloves for more than one individual and always wash your hands again after you take off your gloves.

Wearing gloves does not take away the need for handwashing: Always wash your hands as soon as you take your gloves off. And, only wear a pair of gloves to complete a specific task for a specific individual. Never wear the same pair of gloves for another task or with another individual.

## Six Rights Of Medication Administration

### The Six Rights

When you are giving medication, regardless of the type of medication, you must always follow the six rights.

**Each time you administer a medication, you need to be sure to have the:**

- 1. Right individual**
- 2. Right medication**
- 3. Right dose**
- 4. Right time**
- 5. Right route**
- 6. Right documentation**

Each time you give a medication, you must systematically and conscientiously check your procedure against these six rights.

This is essential every time you administer any medication – including medications that an individual has been taking for a long time.

You must check for all six rights every time you administer any drug to any individual.

**Each time that you give a medication, you also need to remember to do the "Three Checks".** This means that you are going to do a "**triple-check**" to make sure that the six rights are present each time that you give a medication. You must:

- 1. Remove the medication from the locked area and check the prescription label against the medication log to make sure that they match: **this is the 1st check.****
- 2. Before pouring the medication, check the prescription label against the medication order to make sure that they match: **this is the 2nd check.****
- 3. After you pour the medication, but before you give it, check the prescription label against the medication log entry again to make sure that they match: **this is the 3rd check.****

## Right Individual

In order to make sure that you are about to administer medications to the right individual, you have to know the individual.

Even when you know the individual well, mistakes can happen. Sometimes, when medications are being administered to more than one individual in a setting, or if you prepare medications for more than one individual at a time, you can be distracted and give the medications to the wrong individual.

**You can avoid a serious mistake if you:**

1. Prepare medication for one individual at a time.
2. Give the medication to the individual as soon as you prepare it.
3. Do not talk to others and ask them not to talk to you when you are giving medication.
4. Do not stop to do something else in the middle of giving medications.
5. Pay close attention at all times when you are giving medications.

**You must also compare the individual's name on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log. Make sure that they match.**

**If they do not match, or if there is any doubt about whether you are giving the**



**medication to the right individual, !ASK QUESTIONS!**

**If you make a mistake, follow your agency's policy for reporting medication errors.**

You may need to call the individual's physician, the Poison Control Center, and/or take the individual to the emergency room for evaluation.

**THIS IS WHY WE DO THE TRIPLE CHECK.**

## Right Medication

In order to be sure that you are giving the right medication, you must:

Read the medication label carefully (remember that some medications have more than one name: a brand name and at least one generic name).

Check the spelling of the medication carefully. If there is **any** doubt about whether the medication name is correct, stop and call the nurse or the pharmacist **before** you give the medication.

Read the medication order carefully. Make sure that the medication name on the order matches the medication name on the label.

Read the medication log carefully. Make sure that the medication name on the label, the medication order and medication log match **before** giving the medication.

Look at the medication. If there is anything different about the size, shape or color of the medication, call the pharmacist **before** you give it. It could be that you have been given a different generic brand of the medication. But sometimes when a medication looks different it means that you have the wrong medication.

**THIS IS WHY WE DO THE TRIPLE CHECK.**

**Compare the medication name on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.**

**If they do not match, or if there is any doubt that you are giving the right**

**medication,  ! ASK QUESTIONS!**

**If you make a mistake, follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication errors.**

## Right Dose

The right dose is **how much** of the medication you are supposed to give the individual at one time.

To determine the dose, you need to know the **strength** of each medication. In the case of liquid medications, you need to know the strength of the medication in each liquid measure.

The dose equals the strength of the medication multiplied by the amount.

**Look at the sample label below.**

RX #:828291	Town Pharmacy 100 Main Street Pineville, MA 00000 (617) 000-0000	
Jeff Smith		09/29/00
Valproic Acid 250mg (I.C. Depakote)		
Take 2 tabs by mouth twice a day		
Lot #: PS 56721	Exp. Date: 9/29/01	By Dr. B.J. Honeycutt Refills: 4

The **strength** of each Valproic acid pill is **250 mg**.

The **dose** is **500mg** twice daily.

Strength (250mg per pill) X Amount (2 tabs)= 500mg

**Compare the dose on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.**

**If they do not match, or if there is any doubt that you are giving the right**



**dose, ! ASK QUESTIONS!**

**THIS IS WHY WE DO THE TRIPLE CHECK.**

**If you make a mistake follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication errors.**

**ALERT! Always ask the pharmacist or the nurse about any order that requires administering more than 3 tablets or capsules of the same medication in one dose. This could be an over-dosage!**

## Right Time



Some medications must be administered only at very specific times of the day. For other medications, the time of day that you give the medication is less critical.

For example, some medications must be given before meals, one hour after meals or at bedtime in order to work best.

It is very important for medication to be given at the time of day that is written on the medication order. If no specific time is written on the medication order, ask the nurse or pharmacist about the best time of day to give the medication. Write this down on the medication log.

**Compare the time on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.**

**If they do not match, or if there is any doubt about whether you are giving the**

**medication at the right time,  !ASK QUESTIONS!**

**THIS IS WHY WE DO THE TRIPLE CHECK.**

**If you make a mistake, follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication errors.**

Medications must be given within a ½ hour of the time that is listed on the medication log. This means that you have ½ hour before the medication is due, and ½ hour after it is due to administer the medication in order to be on time with medication administration.

**The ½ hour timeframe does not apply to PRN medications.**

**For example: If you have a PRN medication order and PRN protocol for Tylenol to be given every 4 hours as needed, you cannot give it until 4 hours have passed since the last dose.**

**What if a prescribing practitioner writes a medication order for “am,” “pm,” or “hs?”**

Sometimes because of a particular individual's life, it is more useful to have a "freer" interpretation of time than the 1/2hr window. **If the prescribing practitioner does not have specific times in mind, then the Nurse Trainer may choose** to be more natural in our supports of allowing a time variance.

In that case the 1st box of the time space on the med log says AM and under it in the 2<sup>nd</sup> box is written the word “Time” and then in the 3rd box down is written either PM or HS and in the 4th box the word “Time” again. Next to “Time” on each day of administration, **the provider initials and then below it documents the actual time of administration.**

**A discussion between the provider and nurse trainer must occur** at the onset for acceptable time frames but this mechanism allows a much wider "window" - maybe some days the individual has to get up particularly early for work or stay out late for community events or school and on the weekend likes to sleep in. Without changing the prescribing practitioner's order, we allow safe flexibility within the expected guidelines.

**YOU MUST SPEAK WITH THE NURSE TRAINER BEFORE ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS IF A THE PRESCRIPTION STATES AM, PM, OR HS**

## Right Route

The route means how and where the medication goes into the body.

Most medication is taken into the mouth and swallowed, but others enter the body through the skin, rectum, vagina, eyes, ears, nose, and lungs, through a g-tube or by injection.

The most common way (or route) for medications to enter the body is by mouth.

**Compare the route on the prescription label, the medication order and the medication log.**

**If they do not match, or if there is any doubt about whether you are giving the**



**medication by the right route, ! ASK QUESTIONS!**

**THIS IS WHY WE DO THE TRIPLE CHECK**

**If you make a mistake follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication occurrences.**

Sometimes mistakes happen when you are giving several medications by different routes at the same scheduled time.

For example, you may be giving an eye drop and an eardrop to the same individual at the same time. If you become distracted, you could accidentally put the eardrops in the individual's eye. This would be a very serious mistake.

**THIS IS WHY WE DO THE TRIPLE CHECK**

Avoid this type of mistake by giving the eye drops first, and then put away the eye drops. After you have put the eye drops away, give the ear drops.

## Right Documentation

Your responsibilities are not yet complete!

Each time a medication is administered, it must be documented.

Your documentation of medication administration must be done at the time that you give the medication.

You must complete all of the documentation that is required on the medication log.

- Documentation should be done in blue or black ink.
- No pencil or white out can be used.
- Never cross out or write over documentation.
- If you make a mistake when you are documenting on the medication log, circle your mistake and write a note on the log to explain what happened.

**Double check your documentation as soon as you have finished giving medications and again at the end of the day.**

If there is someone else that can double-check your documentation for you, ask him or her to go over your medication log documentation to make sure that it is complete.

All documentation must be done at the time that the medication is administered.



**If there is any question about documentation on the medication log, ASK QUESTIONS!**

**If you make a mistake, follow your agency's policy or procedure for reporting medication occurrences.**