

# When required 'PRN' medication

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April 2019

# What is 'PRN' When Required

- When required medication is to be taken when needed not intended for regular use
- Details of the medication intended for PRN should be in the care plan and on a PRN protocol kept with the MARS
- Plans for PRN use should be person centred
- Review if PRN suitable to be a homely remedy

# Details to be included in CP / Protocol

- Details about what the medicine is for
- symptoms to look out for and when to offer the medicine
- whether the person can ask for the medicine or if they need prompting or observing for signs of need. For example, non-verbal cues
- when to review the medicine and how long the person should expect to take it
- where there is more than one option available, the plan should make clear the order to try them. For example, when using multiple painkillers, you might try paracetamol first then codeine

# Details to be included in CP / Protocol

- the reasons for giving the when required medicine
- how much to give if a variable dose has been prescribed
- what the medicine is expected to do
- the shortest time to wait between doses if the first dose has not worked
- when to check with the prescriber if there is any confusion about which medicines or doses to give

# PRN administration

- Do not limit the offers to medicines rounds or times printed on MARs.
- Make a record of the exact time and the amount of medicine given.
- Review records regularly
- If records show regular use ask prescriber to review
- If PRN not being used ask prescriber to review

# PRN administration

- If medicines do not have the expected effects (such as effective pain relief), contact the prescriber
- Keep a record of responses from prescribers about queries to medicines.
- Ensure staffs understand what the medicines are for and the care plan/protocol

# Ordering and storage of PRNs

- You would normally keep when required medicines in their original packaging.
- Check stock before ordering.
- Only order the amount of 'PRN' medication that is required in order to reduce the amount of medication waste.
- Regularly check expiry dates

# References

1. Care Quality Commission website

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/when-required-prn-medicines>

2. NICE SC1 Managing medicines in care homes  
March 2014



# Further training

- FutureLearn (in association with UEA) are offering a free online course for medicine administration in care homes. It can be found here:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/medicine-administration-for-carers>

- This course is primarily for care workers in residential care homes and nursing home services in the UK. It will be also be of interest to other people working in adult care services including those working in sheltered housing, supported living services, extra care housing services, adult placement homes and other residential care services.
- May be a useful one to suggest to care homes - the online course runs for 3 weeks.