

THE QUARTERLY CONNECTION

Quarterly Report from Pharma-Care, Inc., Health Care Consultation Specialists

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Preventing Errors When Administering Drugs Via Enteral Feeding Tubes

According to an ISMP medication safety alert, the administration of drugs through a feeding tube leads to more medication errors than are reported or recognized. Results of these errors can lead to adverse outcomes such as an occluded feeding tube, reduced drug effect, or drug toxicity – which can lead to patient harm or even death.

Medications that are incompatible with administration via a tube

Do not assume that an oral medication intended to be taken by mouth can be safely administered through a feeding tube. The drug's physical and chemical properties control its release and subsequent absorption. These very specific delivery mechanisms may be altered or destroyed if administered through a feeding tube, reducing its effectiveness or increasing the risk of toxicity.

Improper absorption

Drug absorption depends on a drug's solubility and ability to permeate the intestinal mucosa. The distal end of the feeding tube can be in the stomach, duodenum, or jejunum. Many drugs must be administered into the stomach or duodenum in order to be properly dissolved using gastric juices, bile, and pancreatic enzymes and be fully absorbed through the intestines. Drugs like warfarin that are absorbed high in the small bowel, or oral iron that is dissolved in the stomach and absorbed in the duodenum, may not be properly absorbed if administered via a jejunostomy tube.

Improper preparation

Oral medications intended to be taken by mouth must

be properly prepared for enteral administration.

Tablets crushed and diluted; capsules opened so that the contents can be diluted; *even commercially-available liquid forms of drugs should be further diluted prior to enteral administration.*

Many immediate-release tablets can be safely crushed into a fine powder and diluted prior to administration. But sublingual, enteric-coated, and extended/delayed-release medications should not

be crushed. In addition to destroying the drug's protective coating, crushing enteric-coated tablets tend to clump and clog feeding tubes. These crushed meds can lead to dangerous and erratic blood levels and other side effects. The variety of suffixes used to denote formulation – CD, CR, ER, LA, etc. – make it difficult to quickly determine whether a drug can be safely crushed.

Improper administration techniques

The most common improper administration techniques include mixing multiple drugs together to give at once and failing to flush the tube before giving the first drug and between subsequent drugs. Mixing multiple drugs can cause compatibility issues between medications and the feeding formula and between various medications. Failure to flush the tubes can also result in tube occlusion.

Safe practice recommendations

A good resource for safe practices is "*The Enteral Nutrition Practice Recommendations*", a comprehensive guide developed by an interdisciplinary task force in 2009. It is available on the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition's (ASPEN) website: www.nutritioncare.org/safety.



Pharma-Care, Inc.

Health Care Consultation Specialists

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EPIC Corner

ELECTRONIC PHARMACIST INFORMATION CONSULTANT
(Medication reviews within 48 business hours)

EPIC Phone: 732-943-3573

EPIC Fax: 732-574-3469

An added benefit of using EPIC is in **identifying** residents with **allergies**. For instance, when a resident who is already in the EPIC system is readmitted to your facility, EPIC is able to alert your staff if previously reported allergies have been overlooked. This helps increase the safety of the prescribing regimen and protects your resident.

Help us to get your reviews quickly by making sure the **resident's name is legible** when submitting resident information. Using the EPIC cover sheet for each resident and printing the resident's name in the space provided, maintains the accuracy and speed of the review. If the EPIC pharmacist is unable to read the resident's name, the order sheets will be returned to you with a request that the resident's name be clarified. Of course, this increases the turnaround time for the review. Please make sure that each resident has a cover sheet submitted with the name **clearly printed**.



What Do OSHA Inspectors Look for in Healthcare Settings?

Inspectors are usually interested in:

- ✓ The bloodborne pathogens exposure control plan
- ✓ The hazard communication program / MSDSs
- ✓ Posters and logs (e.g. "It's the Law" poster and sharps injury logs)
- ✓ Hepatitis B vaccination records
- ✓ OSHA yearly training records
- ✓ General safety records

Limit Consumption of Energy Drinks

Emergency rooms have reported an increase in the number of people showing up due to excessive consumption of caffeine after drinking popular energy drinks such as Red Bull, Monster Energy, and 5-Hour Energy. Too much caffeine can raise blood pressure, speed up heart rates, and create symptoms of anxiety, jitteriness, arrhythmias, and insomnia.



Moderate caffeine consumption is considered to be about 400 mg/day for adults. However the serving size of energy drinks can be quite large. A 16oz can of Monster Energy contains 160 mg of caffeine. And many of these products also contain herbal sources of caffeine such as guarana and green tea extract.

Welcome to Our New Clients

Liberty Royal Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center

Hillside Dialysis

Southgate Health Care Center

Town Square

Adult Medical Day Care

Doctors Subcute Care

Bartley Healthcare
Nursing & Rehab

Parkside Dialysis

Lincoln Park Care Center

Lincoln Park Renaissance
Subacute Care Center

Assisted Living Facilities: Train your CNAs

For information about our **Certified Medication Aide** Training Workshops, call Maureen Ziegler at 732-574-9015, ext. 105.



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