



Health & Safety Alert #45-06-08

Missed Taking Some Medication? Does it really Matter? Yes, It Does Matter!



Between 44,000 and 98,000 Americans die each year as a result of medication errors. Skipping or missing medication can lead to:

- Death
- Unnecessary pain
- Loss of good health
- Hospitalizations

It is estimated that 30 to 50 percent of all prescriptions are not taken correctly.

Common reasons for not receiving medication

- I forgot
- I refused
- No one gave them to me
- My prescription was not filled
- I am confused on how/when to take them
- I don't like the taste
- I don't like how they make me feel

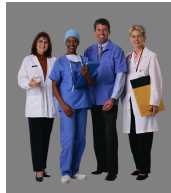
When a medication is not received consider how significant it is for that individual based on the seriousness of their condition. **Ask – Should the prescribing physician be consulted immediately?** Is there a risk for the individual? Tell someone when there is an error or missed medication. Missing a medication, taking the wrong medication, or receiving more or less than prescribed is always to be recorded on an incident report. Recording incidents should result in action to understand the cause and take preventative measures when needed.

1. **GENERAL RULES:**

- **NEVER** increase or decrease the medication dosage without consulting a physician. Only a doctor can make this change.
- **NEVER** skip a dose or take extra later to make up for a missed dose without consulting the prescribing physician.
- **KEEP** medications in the package they come in – so there is no confusion over contents.
- Make sure **ORIGINAL** labels are intact.

- Keep medications in a **SAFE PLACE** to avoid misuse.
- **NEVER** give a person medication that was prescribed for someone else.
- **KEEP** records up-to-date and very clearly written.
- Make sure a **DOCTOR** evaluates all medications a person takes.
- **REMEMBER:** Some medications don't interact well with each other.
- **INFORM** the doctor about allergies or medications that have caused problems in the past.
- **PROPERLY DISPOSE** of all medications that are past the expiration date or that have been discontinued by the prescribing physician. Contact the pharmacist or vendor regarding proper disposal.
- Know your **LIMITS** if you are responsible for administering medication.
- If you have a **QUESTION** about a medication, write it down and get it answered by your delegating nurse, pharmacist, or doctor.
- **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** about specific medications can be found online at search sites such as <http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/default.htm>
- **PREPARE** a list of medications that the person is taking and take that **LIST** to the doctor.

2. Some Questions for the Doctor, Delegating Nurse, or Pharmacist:



- **What is the medicine for?**
- **Will it interact** with medicines already being taken?
- **How often** should it be taken?
- **How much** should be taken?
- Are there any **foods or other medications, supplements, or other things** that should not be taken with it?
- Should it be **taken with** food or on an empty stomach?
- Are there any **special instructions?**
- Are there **side effects** we should watch for and should we report them?
- Can we do anything to **prevent side effects?**
- What should we do if a **dose is missed or incorrect dose given?**
- Do **blood levels** need to be checked with this medication? How often?

For additional information, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at MUI.Unit@dmr.state.oh.us