Guidelines for student nurses and midwives on the management of medicines

These guidelines do not replace local trust policy which takes precedence.
Local policy must be adhered to at all times.

All student nurses and student midwives must observe and participate in the administration of medicines during their programme of education. These guidelines and local medicine administration policies should be discussed at the beginning of each practice experience.

Registered practitioners and students must be aware that whenever a student is involved in the administration of medicines, the registered practitioner maintains the responsibility and accountability for all related activity including: the ordering, receipt, storage, preparation, administration and disposal of medicines and the maintenance of all associated documentation.

With the direct supervision of the registered practitioner, the student should participate in:

- identifying the correct service user
- selecting the prescribed medicine
- calculating the required dosage
- preparing and administering medicine

The student must demonstrate understanding of the action of the medicine, the reason for the prescription, awareness of adverse effects and the ability to recognise such effects. (See student assessment of practice document).

Branch Programmes

During each practice experience in the Branch programme the mentor should assess the student’s proficiency in administering medicines. The student’s level of proficiency must be recorded in the appropriate columns in the assessment of practice document.

The student should increase their level of proficiency in all aspects of medicine administration including the signing of the prescription sheets but always under the direct supervision of the qualified practitioner. The prescription sheet must be countersigned by the registered practitioner.
Controlled Medicines

In practice experiences 1 to 4 student nurses should observe the administration of controlled medicines. Student midwives, with direct supervision, will be involved in the administration of specified controlled medicines; the supervising midwife maintaining responsibility for this activity.

In practice experiences 5 and 6 and with the direct supervision of a midwife or first level nurse, the student nurse and student midwife should:

- “Sign out” controlled medicines in the controlled medicine record as the second person
- Participate in the administration of controlled medicines

Students must not order, receive or dispose of controlled medicines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With the direct supervision of a midwife or first level nurse the student should be involved in administering medicines via the following routes:</th>
<th>Students cannot be involved in administering medicines via the following routes:</th>
<th>Related activities in which students cannot participate but may observe:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>oral</td>
<td>intra-dermal</td>
<td>verbal orders to administer medicine without a written prescription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sublingual</td>
<td>peripheral cannula</td>
<td>patient group directives</td>
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<td>buccal</td>
<td>central venous cannula</td>
<td>cytotoxic medicine administration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>nebulised</td>
<td>epidural</td>
<td>ultraviolet therapy</td>
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<td>inhaled</td>
<td>intra-thecal</td>
<td>arterial cannulation</td>
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<td>intranasal</td>
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<td>topical</td>
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<tr>
<td>trans-dermal</td>
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<td>intramuscular</td>
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<td>rectal</td>
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</tbody>
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Oxygen must be prescribed and students may be involved in the administration of oxygen in accordance with local trust policy.

NB Student Midwives with the direct supervision of a registered practitioner should be involved in administering medicines via:

- epidural

NB Student Midwives with the direct supervision of a registered practitioner should be involved in:

- patient group directives
- ultraviolet therapy
Guidelines for specific situations

Administration of Fluids

Student may administer prescribed, pre-prepared 0.9% sodium chloride or dextrose saline via an existing intravenous or subcutaneous line. This activity must be checked and the connection supervised by a midwife or first level nurse who has deemed the student competent to perform this skill.

This is the only situation where the student can participate in the administration of intravenous or subcutaneous fluid.

Keys

Under no circumstances are students permitted to be responsible for the practice experience’s medicine keys.

Oral Suspensions

Students may participate in the preparation / reconstitution of oral medicines such as suspensions with the direct supervision of the midwife or first level nurse.

Return to practice nursing students (RTPS)

RTPSs attend a study day on medicine administration early in their course. Following attendance at the study day, RTPS's should be involved in the administration of medicines in accordance with the guidance in the RTPS assessment of practice document.

Other NMC policies to be read in conjunction with these guidelines:
- Medical devices (related to infusion devices).
- Vena-section
- Central venous line monitoring
- Blood transfusion
- Complementary medicines/therapies

References


Nursing and Midwifery Council (2008) Standards for medicine management. NMC. London

Royal College of Nursing. (2005) Standards for Infusion Therapy, RCN. London