

Read this important information before administering:

PRN MEDICATIONS

PRN is a Latin term (pro re nata) which means to give a medication as needed. PRN medications may require a prescription, such as a narcotic used for pain control or a medical order if it is an over-the-counter medication used to treat pain or constipation.

Typically, PRN medications are not needed on a regular schedule because a single dose or a few doses will resolve the condition. For example, taking acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for a headache may only require one or two doses to relieve the headache. A medication commonly ordered as PRN may be ordered to be given on a routine basis (known as a *scheduled medication*) when an individual has chronic pain.

PRN medications are just as important as scheduled medications. It is the caregiver's responsibility to be aware of why and when it should be administered.

All PRN medications must be written on the Medication Administration Record (MAR.) Giving PRN medications as directed can prevent other health care conditions.



Here are some more facts:

- The caregiver must watch the resident or ask if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms specific for the reason the PRN medication was ordered, such as a headache or no bowel movement.

It is not the sole responsibility of the resident to request a PRN medication.

- If a PRN order allows for additional doses, the caregiver must check back before a second dose is given. For example, if the orders are for every six hours, the resident should be checked no later than five and a half hours from the first dose to determine if a second dose is needed.
- Orders for pain medication cannot just state “for pain.” Orders must identify the specific reason for taking pain medications, such as for hip pain.
- Giving a pain medication for pain other than why it was ordered is considered a medication error.
- PRN orders for over-the-counter medications require a medical order.
- Document why a PRN was given and the results. Results can be the caregiver's and/or resident's observations.

For additional information on safe medication practices go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/DHS-SafeMeds>

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Publications and Design Section at 503-378-3486, 711 for TTY, or email DHS-OHA.PublicationRequest@dhs.ohs.state.or.us. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.



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