

# **IN-HOME QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

## **BEST PRACTICE: MEDICATION MANAGEMENT**

### **IN-HOME AIDE TRACK**



Best Practice Intervention Packages were designed for use by any In-Home Provider Agency to support reducing avoidable hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Any In-Home Aide can use these educational materials.

Best Practice Intervention Packages were designed to educate and create awareness of strategies and interventions to reduce avoidable hospitalizations and unnecessary emergency room visits.

# IN-HOME AIDE TRACK

This best practice package is designed to introduce and/or expand the knowledge of the In-Home aide to the importance of a structured medication management program in reducing avoidable acute care hospitalizations.

## Objectives

After completing the activities in the In-Home Aide track of this Best Practice Intervention Package, *Medication Management*, the learner will be able to:

1. Recognize that assisting patient and/or caregiver with preparing and taking the medications may help reduce acute care hospitalizations.
2. Appreciate that the In-Home Aide is an important part of the In-Home team.
3. Describe 3 factors that may impact patient medication management that need reported to the agency.

Complete the following activities:

- Read the medication management description and review.
- Read the Medication Management-In-Home Aide's Guide to Practical Application.
- Complete the In-Home Aide post test and give to your supervisor/manager.

Disclaimer: Some of the information contained within this Best Practice Intervention Package may be more directed and intended for an acute care setting, or a higher level of care or skilled level of care setting such as those involved in Medicare. The practices, interventions and information contained are valuable resources to assist you in your knowledge and learning.

Disclaimer: All forms included are optional forms; each can be used as Tools, Templates or Guides for your agency and as you choose. Your individual agency can design or draft these forms to be specific to your own agency's needs and setting.

# Medication Management

Medication Management is an important best practice intervention that agencies can use to help reduce avoidable hospitalizations. Over 30% of patients hospitalized have a problem with medication management. Agencies are working to improve the patient's ability to take their medications safely, consistently and as prescribed by the physician and to improve the caregiver's ability to manage the patient's medications.

Nurses will be addressing medication management with patients and/or caregivers in several main ways:

- Assessment
- Education
- Community resources

There are many factors related to medication management that must be evaluated. The patient's and/caregiver's ability to **safely prepare and take** medications needs to be assessed and can include the ability to:

- Safely and accurately read medication labels
- Swallow medications without difficulty
- Pick up medications and get it to their mouth without dropping or losing the medication
- Organize medications so they can be taken as prescribed (this may involve a friend, relative, or nurse preparing the medications in a pill box or some other way to help with preparing or administering the medication)

## How can an In-Home aide help with medication management?

You are an additional set of eyes and ears to observe the patient and caregiver. Report potential medication problems that might ultimately lead to hospitalization.

Although you are an additional set of eyes and ears to observe the patient's and/or caregiver's ability to manage the patient's medications, you are not allowed to administer or actually handle the medications. Report to your supervisor any potential problems regarding the patient's and/or caregiver's ability to administer the patient's medication.

# Medication Management

## In-Home Aide's Guide to Practical Application

Purpose: In-Home aides have an important role related to medication management by:

1. Being aware of potential factors that may affect the patient taking medications correctly.
2. Learning when to notify the nurse with potential problems.

Below are examples of factors that should be brought to the nurse manager's attention:

### Physical Factors

- Difficulty seeing or complaints of problems with vision such as blurred vision, broken or lost glasses
- Difficulty getting to the medications
- Loss of or decreased ability to use fingers and/or hands to hold small objects or open containers
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Uncontrolled pain

### Environmental Factors

- Pills found on the floor, in bed, etc.
- Caregiver (new, change or absent)

### Mental Factors

- Confusion which may affect patient taking medications
- Confusion of caregiver if he/she is preparing medications
- Decline in mental status (increased confusion, unusual drowsiness)
- Difficulty remembering or recalling events in the recent past or difficulty remembering how to perform routine tasks
- Sudden depression or loss of motivation

### Financial Factors

- Problems buying food
- Patient/family mentioning money problems or lack of money for medications
- Phone or electricity shut off

### Patient not taking medications as prescribed

- Adamant about not taking medications or following physician orders
- Not getting prescriptions filled timely
- State that they are "too sick" to take their medications
- State caregiver is not giving their medications as ordered
- Finding lost or misplaced medications (individual pills or medication bottles)

- Patient or family discussing fear of patient becoming addicted to medications (usually pain medication, sleeping pills or muscle relaxants)

**In-Home Aide Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **IN-HOME AIDE POST TEST**

### **Medication Management**

**Directions: Choose the ONE BEST response to the following questions. Circle the answer that identifies the ONE BEST response.**

1. In-Home aides are part of the interdisciplinary team and can reduce avoidable acute care hospitalizations by observing for potential medication problems in the home.

- A. True
- B. False

2. There are a variety of factors that may affect the patient's or caregiver's ability to prepare and take their medications safely. In-Home aides should observe and report any of the following to the agency, **except**:

- A. vision problems
- B. pills found on the floor or in the bed
- C. new grocery store
- D. new caregiver

3. Signs of potential changes in the patient's mental status could include the following:

- A. increased forgetfulness
- B. sudden depression
- C. forgetting if he/she took medication
- D. All of the above

4. Patients that refuse to take their medications must be placed in a nursing home.

- A. True
- B. False

5. The In-Home Aide role in medication management includes:

- A. none - the aide should not be involved with medication management
- B. reporting changes such as difficulty swallowing or sudden depression
- C. observing and reporting if there appears to be financial issues that might prevent the patient from getting prescriptions filled timely
- D. reporting the discovery of pills in the bed

- E. All of the above
- F. All but A