

March 17, 2015

Share the love

By Heidi Shafland, MSN, A-CCNS-P

Wasting medications, BCMA, 6 Rights of Medication Administration... It seems people are always bringing up those issues. It may seem redundant or overkill until you think about how easy it is for medication errors to happen. I remember going to the Pyxis to withdraw Lidocaine for my patient and ended up accidentally grabbing Labetalol. I either pressed the wrong button or the wrong medication was in the drawer. I hurried back to my bedside to pull up the medication and, luckily, had my neighbor double check my dose. She looked at the vial and told me I had the wrong medication. It was a near miss that saved my patient from potential medical harm and me from a lot of heartache. Emergency situations, look-alike medications and busy shifts all make safe medication administration more challenging.

Why do people continually reinforce these basics of medication administration?

- ✓ To ensure patient safety
- ✓ To ensure policy and laws are being complied with
- ✓ To ensure your nursing license is protected
- ✓ To ensure your co-workers' licenses are protected

Check out these look-alike medications:



What does being an independent double check entail?

- ✓ You are present when the medication is pulled up from the vial
- ✓ You check the vial to ensure it is the correct drug
- ✓ Calculate the correct dose/volume of medication that needs to be withdrawn
- ✓ Compare that number with what is pulled up in the syringe
- ✓ Compare the syringe to what is ordered by checking the order in the MAR
- ✓ If it is a narcotic, you watch as the remainder of the drug is wasted appropriately

Follow these steps each and every time you pull up a narcotic, benzodiazepine, or high risk medication to reduce for error

According to Children's policy, when should witnessing occur?

- A. Returning a medication to the Pyxis
- B. When documenting a medication error
- C. When pulling all medications
- D. Reconciling a drawer
- E. All of the above
- F. A, B, D only

The correct answer is F – A, B, D only.

Practice Safe Medication Administration

- ✓ BCMA: Scan your patient's armband and the drug before administration
- ✓ 6 Patient Rights
 - Right Patient
 - Right Drug
 - Right Dose
 - Right Route
 - Right Time/Frequency
 - Right Documentation

For patient safety and protection of your license

Improve "wasting compliance"

- ✓ Utilize a "Buddy System": two nurses could "buddy up." This allows the nurse to know who they are responsible to witness for and get a witness from
- ✓ Add "witnessing and wasting" to shift report... give the new nurse a "heads up" on how often they potentially will need a witness
- ✓ When a new patient is admitted: review the MAR to see how many times in the shift a witness may be required. This allows for proper time management of other daily tasks, as well, for both the nurse and their "buddy"
- ✓ Waste at the Pyxis
 - It will save time for both nurses because the witness can chart both the removal as well as the wasting of the medication at the same time

- Wasting at the Pyxis gives the nurse a full light source, which will increase proper measurements. Often, patient's rooms are dark. This can pose a risk for improper wasting because of poor lighting.

Who is this a picture of?



- His name is Dr. Harold Shipman
- He was a physician in Great Britain from 1970-1998
- Middle class citizen
- Husband and father of 4
- Known drug addict (almost lost his medical license but completed rehab and was considered "cured")
- Murdered between 215 and 260 patients with IV narcotics
- Caused "Shipman Inquires" which in 2007 resulted in stricter drug policies and consequences not only for medical staff but hospitals as well.

Make it a priority to follow witnessing policies.

Share the love... witness for others so they will witness for you.