

MEDICINES MATTER

MOCH TEAM NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2023

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During winter, it is important your residents have access to medication that can help ease the symptoms of Colds, Flu and COVID-19. Do your care home use Homely Remedies?

- Homely remedies should be authorised by a GP for individual residents, taking into consideration their prescribed medications.
- Care homes should have adequate supplies of Homely Remedies.
- Records should be kept of purchase, administration and destruction.
- Homely remedies should be stored appropriately and separate from prescribed medication.
- Care home staff should be competent to administer Homely Remedies safely.

[Click here](#) to download and print our Homely Remedies Good Practice Guidance.

Coping with winter pressures

During winter, Colds, Flu, Norovirus and COVID-19 can have an impact on social and NHS services including care homes and hospitals. It is important that care homes prepare for upcoming winter months so that residents are kept safe and well.

Here are some tips to keep yourselves and your residents well during the winter:

- Infection control policies should be up to date and signed by staff to say they have read and understood the policy.
- Ensure residents over the age of 65 have been immunised against pneumococcal infections and residents aged 70 years immunised against shingles.
- Don't stop educating staff and residents about good hand washing techniques.
- Ensure that liquid soap, disposable paper towels and alcohol-based hand gel are available in residents' rooms and communal areas. Stock levels should be adequately maintained.
- When coughing or sneezing cover the mouth. Used tissues should be disposed of appropriately.
- There should be adequate supplies of PPE available for care home staff especially during an outbreak. Staff should know how to use PPE appropriately.
- Wearing several layers of thin clothing keeps the body warmer than one thick layer. Make use of blankets, scarves, gloves and hats. Thermal clothing also helps keep the body warm.
- Eat and drink well! Ensure residents eat nutritious hot meals.
- Staying hydrated isn't only for the summer months. Make sure hot drinks are available. Not only does it keep residents hydrated but warm too! Are you aware of nutritional homemade milkshakes and homemade soups?
- Get exercising! Encourage residents to move around if they are able to do so. Exercising helps keep the blood flowing and keep the body warm.
- If there is an outbreak in one section of the care home, be mindful the infection may spread if staff move from one section to another.

COVID-19 vaccination

Help protect yourself, your family, friends and residents by ensuring staff and residents have had their COVID-19 vaccination.

As a frontline health or social care worker, you are eligible for a free COVID-19 booster vaccination. You can either:

- [Book a COVID-19 vaccination appointment online](#)
- [Go to a walk in COVID-19 vaccination site](#)

Flu vaccination

The flu virus can lead to serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

As a frontline health or social care worker, you are eligible for a free flu vaccine. You can either:

- Contact your GP surgery to book an appointment.
- [Find a Pharmacy that offers NHS flu vaccination](#)
- [Book a flu vaccination appointment online](#) or use the NHS app.

Please encourage all visitors to your care home to get their flu and COVID-19 vaccines to help protect their loved ones.

Care Home residents who have not yet had their COVID-19 booster or flu vaccine must be highlighted to their GP.

Ensure you record the vaccination details in the residents care plan- name of brand, batch number, expiry date and site of administration of the vaccination.

Managing Infection Outbreaks

With some outbreaks, e.g. Flu or Scabies, sometimes treatments are prescribed and measures are advised to stop the spread of the infection. Please follow the advice of the IPC teams and UKHSA. If there is an outbreak at your care home and UKHSA have advised medication or treatment please contact:

- Frimley ICB MOCH team- frimleyicb.moch@nhs.net
- Frimley ICB Infection control team- frimleyicb.ipcteam@nhs.net

Medication ordering and the 28 day cycle

Care homes should have arrangements in place for ordering and receiving repeat, acute and when required ('PRN') medication. When poor ordering systems are in place it can lead to missed doses or too much waste. Care homes operate a 28-day monthly medication cycle and staff should minimise urgent requests of routine monthly medication for residents.

- When ordering monthly medication, care home staff should check current stocks of medication before placing the order, especially for 'PRN' medication.
- If there is a new resident or changes to a resident's medication that requires an order to be made mid-cycle, care home staff should ensure medication quantities are synchronised with the 28-day cycle.
- It is best practice to have a point of contact at the GP practice for requests and queries. This could be the Prescription Clerk, PCN/GP Practice Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician.
- It is best practice to have a point of contact at the supplying Pharmacy for requests and queries.
- Orders of monthly medication should be placed on week 2 of the 28-day cycle. If you are unsure when to place the orders discuss this with the supplying Pharmacy or GP Practice. Due dates can be highlighted so staff are aware when ordering should take place.
- **Do not routinely order urgent supplies of a regular monthly medication from an out of hours service.** If this is a regular occurrence, contact the supplying Pharmacy, GP Practice or MOCH team for support.
- Before placing the medication order, double check the MAR chart and any clinical or discharge letters so that nothing is missed.
- Ensure care home staff are aware of ordering deadlines during the Christmas bank holiday period so that an out of hours service is not used inappropriately.