

Parent/carer administration of medication whilst in hospital

Information for parents with a baby on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

Administering your baby's medication

When your baby is ready for discharge from the Special Care Baby Unit, you will need to know about their medication and also know how and when to give it, ready for when you get home. Whilst your baby is in hospital, it may be possible for you to learn how to give your baby their medicines and this is known as parent administration. Parent administration gives an opportunity to learn about the medicines your baby needs, and why they need them. It will also give you the confidence to be able to practice in the safety of the hospital environment before going home.

Participation is not compulsory and you do not have to do this whilst in hospital, but we would like you to feel confident to be able to administer your baby's medication for when you go home. In this case, your baby's medicines will continue to be given by the nursing staff and they will ensure that you still have all the information you need and ensure that you receive guidance in giving your baby's medication prior to your baby going home. Once home, our Neonatal Outreach Nurses will be able to support you further if this is something you feel you may need.

If you would like to give your baby their medication whilst in hospital, the nurse will explain exactly what is involved and answer any questions you may have. (Please note, not all medicines are suitable to be given by parents and some will need to be supervised by trained nurses).

What happens next?

If you are interested, the nurse will carry out an individual assessment to ensure this is a safe process for your baby.

From this assessment, the most appropriate method can be decided. This may be:

Level 1: The nursing staff continue to give the medicines but will ensure that you have been given all the information about safe storage and administration of drugs that you need.

Level 2: The medicines can be kept in a secure locker with your baby and the nurse will supervise you giving the medicines.

Level 3: The medicines are kept in a secure bedside locker with your baby and you will accept full responsibility for the storage and administration of them. You will be given a locker key card.

Your baby's medicines will be prescribed and the nursing staff will explain to you about the medicines:

- what they are for
- the amounts required
- how and when they should be given
- any side effects
- what to do if you forget to give a dose or give an inaccurate dose.

You will receive a medication information card 'My baby's medication' to complement the information you receive.

Certain medicines may only be administered by a nurse, and it will be the nurse's responsibility to ensure these are given at the prescribed times.

If you or your baby's situation changes or there is a change in medication, you may need to be reassessed.

Medicines, if not used properly, can be dangerous. You should never share your baby's medicine with anyone else.

References

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust self-administration of medication standard operating procedure (2018)

North Bristol NHS Trust – '*Parent and Carer administration of medication whilst in hospital*' Information for parents with a baby on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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