

OASIS Alert

Clip & Save: Here's How To Alert Caregivers To Medication Problems

Give everyone the tools to catch -- and fix -- medication concerns.

While only one clinician should perform a medication review, everyone involved in a patient's care should work together to keep him or her safe from medication mistakes.

Action plan: Post this checklist, which is included in HHQI's medication management best practices intervention package, in your patients' living area so that everyone can keep an eye out for these glaring problems. Ask clinicians and caregivers to alert management if a patient has:

- Physical Factors.
- Difficulty seeing or problems with vision such as blurred vision, broken or lost glasses
- Difficulty getting to the medications
- Loss of/decreased ability to use fingers and/or hands to hold small objects or open containers
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Uncontrolled pain
- Environmental Factors.
- Pills on the floor, in bed, etc.
- Caregiver instability (person is new, constantly changes, or frequently absent)
- Mental Factors.
- Confusion which may affect patient taking 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
- Caregiver is confused about how to prepare medications
- Financial Factors.
- Problems buying food
- Patient/family mentioning money problems or lack of money for medications
- Phone or electricity shut off
- Noncompliance.

- Adamant about not taking medications or following physician orders
- Not getting prescriptions filled timely
- States that s/he is "too sick" to take medications
- States caregiver is not giving medications as ordered
- Finding lost or misplaced medications (individual pills or medication bottles)
- Patient or family discuss fear of patient becoming addicted to medications (usually pain medication, sleeping pill or muscle relaxants)

Resource: Access the checklist and other powerful medication management tools from the HHQI National Campaign's website at www.homehealthquality.org/hh/resources/education/default.aspx.