

Good Practice Guidance for Care Homes

Medication Expiry Dates

Medication	Unopened: store following the manufacturers guidance	Expiry date once opened – refer to Patient Information Leaflet (PIL)	Comments
Tablets & capsules in original blister strips or container with printed expiry date	Manufacturer expiry date	Manufacturer expiry date (Check PIL).	PRN (when required) medication, wherever possible, should be used from the manufacturer's original pack. (The expiry date is printed on each strip.) Medicines kept for use in next month should be recorded in the 'carried forward' section of the Medication Administration Record (MAR) chart.
Loose tablets & capsules re-dispensed from original pack without a printed expiry date.	6 months after dispensing, unless dispenser/manufacturer advises otherwise	6 months after dispensing, unless dispenser/manufacturer advises otherwise.	
Tablets & capsules re-dispensed into Monitored Dosage System (MDS)	8 weeks	8 weeks unless pharmacy advises otherwise.	Note: some pharmacies may have longer expiries for popular items. This will be printed on the back of the blister pack.
Oral Liquids dispensed in original containers pack	Manufacturer expiry date	Manufacturer expiry date unless manufacturer advises otherwise	Estimate the amount of any liquids carried over. Medicines retained for use should be recorded in the 'carried forward' section of the MAR chart. Write date opened on the dispensing label.
Oral liquids re-dispensed into amber bottles	6 months after dispensing, unless dispenser/manufacturer advises otherwise	6 months after dispensing, unless dispenser/manufacturer advises otherwise	
Creams/Ointments	Manufacturer expiry date	Tube/pump dispensers/Tubs – Manufacturer expiry date unless manufacturer advises otherwise. Gloves must be worn when removing cream/ointment. If there is obvious damage to the container or contamination please destroy. If the product lasts longer than 3 months you may be able to request a smaller pack size.	Write the DATE when opened on the dispensing label.
Eye drops/ointment	Manufacturer expiry date	Usually 28 days but some new preparations are stable for longer, always check manufacturer	
External liquids (e.g. Lotions, shampoos & bath oils)	Manufacturer expiry date	Manufacturer expiry date unless manufacturer advises otherwise	It is not normal practice in care homes to have one bottle of eye drops for each eye unless advised by the GP.
Ear drops	Manufacturer expiry date	Usually 3 months unless manufacturer advises otherwise	
Nose drops/sprays	Manufacturer expiry date		
Inhalers	Manufacturer expiry date	Manufacturer expiry date unless manufacturer advises otherwise	If inhalers/sprays are used on a PRN basis, keep for on-going use; do not routinely re-order each month. Write details on current MAR chart
Glyceryl trinitrate sprays / Blood Glucose Monitoring strips	Manufacturer expiry date	Manufacturer expiry date unless manufacturer advises otherwise	
Insulins	Manufacturer's expiry date when stored in a fridge at temperature between +2°C and +8°C	When in use, insulin can be kept at normal room temperature (i.e. not to exceed +25°C) for 1 month	Ask the GP to prescribe the nearest number of pens/cartridges needed per month to reduce stock piling. This will depend on dosage prescribed