Medication Safety Notice

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Issued by Medicines and Technology Policy and Programs, SA Health
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/medicationsafety

A patient **Safety Notice** strongly advises the implementation of particular recommendations or solutions to improve quality and safety.

We recommend you inform:

- General Managers
- Pharmacy Directors
- Medical Directors
- Clinical Directors
- Nursing Directors
- Oncology and Haematology Units
- Infectious Diseases
- Hospital @ Home
- Drug and Therapeutics Committees
- Medication Safety Committees
- Safety and Quality Units
- Clinical Governance

Contact details:

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Government of South Australia
SA Health

Elastomeric Infusor Devices for Medication Administration

Purpose

To raise awareness and understanding of the importance of appropriate staff and patient education in the correct use and monitoring of elastomeric infusor devices for administering medications. These devices are also called elastomeric pumps or balloon pumps; examples include Baxter Infusors™ and Braun Easypumps®.

Background

Elastomeric infusors are lightweight, disposable devices that contain a balloon filled with injectable medication. They are used to administer treatment continuously over a defined timeframe, usually between 24 hours and seven days, promoting patient recovery and improved quality of life by allowing ambulatory treatment. The rate of the infusion is determined by the prescriber and managed by a flow restrictor on the device.

Incidents arising from the use of these devices have been reported nationally and internationally and relate to both staff and patient related factors:

Staff factors:

- leakage of medication due to incorrect insertion of needle
- infusion not administered completely due to failure to release the line clamp or incorrect positioning of the device on the patient
- insufficient provision of education to patients on the correct use of the devices.

Patient factors:

- inadvertent compression or cutting of line
- incorrect storage or exposure to incorrect temperature conditions
- lack of knowledge about monitoring and reporting progress of the infusion.

Practice points for health professionals:

- Ensure you can identify all parts of the device and know how to correctly connect and disconnect the device to and from a patient.
- Ensure directions for use are followed, including:
  - the Luer Lock Connector (flow restrictor) is taped to the patient's skin at approximately the same level as the top of the device to maintain a consistent flow rate.
  - the line is inserted correctly; the IV tubing is not clamped or kinked.
- Be aware of monitoring the infusion progress and storage requirements:
  - The balloon will start to slowly deflate as soon as the device is connected to the port. It will shrink over several hours or days depending on the infusion rate. The Infusion is complete when the balloon is completely deflated and all the indicator marks are visible.
  - In the event that a device does not completely infuse within the expected time, an immediate plan must be developed with the treating team to determine whether the infusion should continue, or an alternative management plan developed.

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  - The devices may be stored in the refrigerator or at room temperature depending on the medication.
  - If stored in the refrigerator, bring the device to room temperature before use.

Information to be provided to patients:

Provide advice and education for patients, including written information and advice about who to contact if questions or problems arise.
This should include both written and verbal information about the following:

- How the device works and, where relevant, a demonstration to patients/ carers of how to connect and change the devices.
- Monitoring the infusion progress:
  - when the infusion is due to finish and how to be sure it is going through
  - checking the line or port needle once a day for any kinks, leaking fluid, redness, pain or swelling.
- Storage and use:
  - do not submerge or expose the device to a direct stream of water; place the device in a plastic bag or on a flat surface outside the shower/bath
  - while sleeping place the device at about the same level as where the device connects to the catheter or port – not above the head or on the floor
  - the device can be placed under the pillow
  - light exercise, such as walking, is acceptable as long as the product remains close to room temperature and is not exposed to water
  - ensure the device remains at room temperature and is not exposed to extreme heat or cold; keep the device out of direct sunlight.

Action required by SA Health staff:

1. Ensure appropriate patient selection and education before commencing treatment with elastomeric infusor devices to ensure patients can manage the device.
2. Provide advice and education for patients, including written information; provide contact details in case patients have questions or problems arise.
3. In the event of the full amount not being infused, the treating team should initiate a treatment plan to address the reduced dosage. Discuss with the patient possible causes and steps to be taken. Document the actions taken in the patient's medical record.
4. Report any incidents or adverse events associated with elastomeric infusor devices to the Safety Learning System (SLS).

Action required by SA Health services:

1. Ensure all relevant staff are aware of and have access to this notice.
2. Ensure there is an escalation process in place when patients return and the full amount has not been infused.
3. Review current staff training in the use of elastomeric infusor devices is appropriate and in place.

For further information, please email HealthMedicationSafety@sa.gov.au

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