

**COMMUNITY PROTOCOL FOR
ADMINISTERING MEDICATION USING
A NEBULISER**

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Introduction

This procedure relates to the administration of medication, using a nebuliser, by appropriately trained staff within the community.

Rationale

A nebuliser/compressor is a device used to deliver a drug by inhalation, directly into the lungs. [1,3,4]

The main indication for administering medication using a nebuliser is when the patient is unable to use a pressurised metered-dose inhaler or breath-actuated device or if the patient's condition deteriorates such that emergency medication needs to be administered by the most effective method. [1,3]

Principles

1. There are several nebuliser masks, pots, and compressors available. Nurses/carers must be familiar with the equipment available and know how to use it.
2. Nurses/carers caring for patients who require medication using a nebuliser must be able to recognise changes in the patient's breathing which would indicate the need to administer emergency medication to prevent worsening of condition.

Authority to Proceed

1. Treatment must be prescribed by a medical practitioner. [3]
2. This procedure should only be undertaken by nurses/carers who have received training in the administration of medication using a nebuliser.
3. This procedure should only be carried out by staff who are competent and confident to perform the procedure.

Training/Skills

1. Staff undertaking this procedure must have successfully completed a theoretical and practical training course in administering medication using a nebuliser.
2. Carers must feel competent and confident that their skills and knowledge are maintained.
3. Carers competencies should be assessed at least annually, more regularly if skills are not being used on a regular basis.

4. Nurses must feel confident and competent that their skills and knowledge are maintained within the Scope of Professional Practice. [2]

Special Factors

1. This procedure is appropriate for co-operative children and adults.
2. If caring for a patient with learning or physical disabilities or for an unco-operative child or adult, then the nurses/carer must stay with the patient until all medication has been administered, assisting with holding the mask in place if necessary.
3. The nebuliser machine is for SINGLE patient use only. [4,5]
4. The nebuliser machine should be serviced every 6-12 months. [3,5]
5. The filter should be changed every 6 months or sooner if the filter turns completely grey. [3,4,5]
6. The mask and nebuliser pot should be cleaned after each use as directed in the procedure so as to remove any remaining medication. [3,4,5]
7. The mask, nebuliser, pot and tubing should be changed every 2 months. [3,4]

PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICATION USING A NEBULISER

Equipment

Nebuliser machine
Mask, nebuliser pot and tubing
Medication
Medication chart

Prepare the Equipment

1. Wash hands as per Walsall teaching Primary Care Trust Procedure.
2. Gather equipment needed.
3. Check medication chart.

Prepare the Patient

1. Make sure the patient is in a comfortable position preferably upright. The patient can be sitting or in bed supported with pillows and backrest.
2. Explain the procedure to the patient.

Administering Medication [4,5,6,7]

1. Place the nebuliser machine on a level, sturdy surface. DO NOT place the nebuliser on the floor. [3,4]
2. Lift up the lid to open the storage compartment and make sure the power switch is in the off position '0'.
3. Attach the power cable to the nebuliser and into the mains.
4. Attach tubing to the air outlet connector on the nebuliser.
5. Unscrew the nebuliser pot, put medication into the pot and screw back together again.
6. Attach nebuliser pot to mask, hold the pot upright to prevent spillage of medication & attach the tubing to the bottom of the pot.
7. Place the mask over the patient's mouth and nose.
8. Switch the nebuliser machine on.
9. It should take about 10 minutes for the medication to go through. A mist will be visible which will stop when the medication has finished. The patient must be supervised at all times whilst having their nebuliser.

PLEASE NOTE: if you are administering steroid medication then you must not stand in close proximity so as not to inhale the steroid medication yourself.

10. Once treatment has finished, switch off the nebuliser machine & remove the mask from the patient.
11. Wash the patient's face to remove any medication from their skin.
12. Observe for side effects of the medication.

Documentation

1. Record in the patient's records the medication which has been administered.

Care of Equipment

1. Unplug the nebuliser machine.
2. Disconnect the tubing from the air outlet connector.
3. Disconnect the tubing from the nebuliser pot.
4. Remove the pot from the mask.
5. Unscrew the nebuliser pot.
6. Wash the mask & nebuliser pot in hot, soapy water.
7. Rinse thoroughly, dry with a paper towel & leave to air dry.
DO NOT use a cleaning brush or put paper clips or needles into the jet holes. [4,5]
8. Once dry, store in a plastic container labelled with the patient's name.
9. DO NOT wash the tubing. [4]
10. Wipe the machine down with a damp cloth once a week. [3,4,5]

TROUBLE SHOOTING FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICATION THROUGH A NEBULISER

Problem	Action
The nebuliser does not work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Check the power cable is fitted into the machine correctly.2. Check the power is in the on position.3. If the nebuliser is still not working then contact the District Nurse or the Community Children's Nurse for advice.
A mist is not visible when administering medication.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Check that the medication has not spilt out of the nebuliser pot.2. Check that the nebuliser pot is assembled correctly.3. Check that the tubing is not kinked.4. Clean the nebuliser pot with hot, soapy water, rinse and dry and reassemble. You may need to use a new mask and nebuliser pot.
The nebuliser works slowly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Check the filter, if it is grey then it needs to be changed.

REFERENCES

1. British Medical Association (2005) British National Formulary. Section 3.
2. UKCC (1992) Scope of Professional Practice.
3. British Lung Foundation (2004) www.lunguk.org/nebulisers.asp
4. Sunrise Medical Ltd. (1995) DeVilbiss SunMist Compressor/Nebuliser Manufacturers Instructions.
5. Birmingham Children's Hospital Nursing Procedures (2001). Instructions for the preparation of drugs and equipment for nebulisation.
6. www.ngt.org.uk/nursingmidwifery/clinprocman/SectionB/Nebuliser.htm
7. Ward, D. (2005) Greater Peterborough NHS Primary Care Partnership- Guidelines to Good Practice. Drug Administration and Nebulisation.