



Medication Minute ... Brought to you by

the Medication Committee

PRN JUDGEMENTS

There are 4 judgments to consider when a PRN is given:

1. Symptoms

- The conditions or reasons for use
- Must be specific and clear (this can be found in the client's medication profile and in the client's medication delivery instructions), for example: dental pain, headache, leg muscle pain – **not** simply pain; kicking, spitting, pacing, screaming, hitting etc. – **not** simply agitation or aggression

2. Amount

- May be a range dose which gives the client the flexibility to take a dose that best suits their need. For example, a client may have an order: ibuprofen 200mg, 1-2 tabs q4h for leg pain.
- The client's pain may be worse one day and he may request 2 tabs to control his pain. Whereas another day his pain may not be so bad, and he will request only 1 tab.
- You have to determine the amount by using your assessment skills to assess a client's need for the PRN medication
- PRN orders will state the maximum daily dose - how frequently it can be given in a 24 hour period (to prevent an overdose or toxicity i.e. max daily dose: 1200mg)

3. Time/ Frequency

- Before the administration of any PRN medication, the client's MAR should be checked to ensure that the drug has not been administered by someone else, or that the specified time interval has passed since the medication was last administered.
- When an order reads "q3 to q4h" you may give the medication as often as every 3 hours

4. Effectiveness

- It is important to know how long it should take for the medication to be effective, what the desired effect is and when it is most appropriate to reassess the client
- When administering PRN pain mediation you are required to document the relief/effectiveness that the client obtains – did the medication work? how long did it take for the medication to work? (this is documented on the back of the PRN MAR sheet).

Always document and communicate PRN medication administration according to policy and procedure. Ensure that when the client has a choice of dosage (i.e. "1-2 tablets") the number of tablets administered is recorded on the PRN MAR sheet.