

Monitored Medicines

Risk mitigation strategies for pharmacists

What are risk mitigation strategies?

These are strategies that aim to maintain patient safety by reducing the risks of harms from the use of monitored medicines. They should be:

- discussed with the patient as part of a shared decision-making process
- patient centred—appropriate for the individual patient and their identified risks
- proportionate to the identified risks.

Patients may require one or more risk mitigation strategies to be put in place.

What risk mitigations strategies can pharmacists use to manage high-risk clinical scenarios related to monitored medicines?

These examples are not exhaustive and may not be suitable for all patients. You must apply your professional judgement to determine the most appropriate strategies to use for each patient.

Pharmacist services

- Recommend (with patient and prescriber engagement):
 - a referral to an accredited pharmacist for a Home Medicines Review or Residential Medication Management Review
 - a MedsCheck
 - staged supply
 - the use of a Dose Administration Aid
 - naloxone therapy.
- Provide patient education on the benefits, risks and alternatives to using the monitored medicine.
- Provide patient monitoring and side effect management.
- Review current non-pharmacological and self-management strategies.

Medicine management strategies

- Consider discussing dose and/or formulation adjustment with the prescriber.
- Recommend (with patient and prescriber engagement):
 - opioid tapering plans—strategies to safely reduce opioid dose
 - opioid rotation plans—changing opioids to increase opioid effectiveness (at a safer dose)
 - benzodiazepine/z-drug tapering or deprescribing—strategies to safely reduce benzodiazepines or z-drugs (zolpidem or zopiclone)
 - gabapentinoid management—including safe prescribing, monitoring and reduction as required
 - quetiapine management (for off label use)—including safe prescribing, monitoring and reduction as required.

To learn more about these monitored medicine management strategies, visit the QScript Learning portal: www.qscriptlearn.health.qld.gov.au

What are monitored medicine-related problems and clinical interventions?

Under the Monitored Medicines Standard, health practitioners proposing to dispense a monitored medicine for a patient must document details of any medicine-related problem identified and any clinical intervention performed in relation to the monitored medicine.

- **Monitored medicine-related problems** are events or circumstances involving monitored medicine treatment that actually or potentially interfere with the patient experiencing an optimum outcome of medical care¹.
- **Clinical interventions** are any professional activities by the dispenser directed towards improving the quality use of medicines and resulting in a recommendation for a change in the patient's medication therapy, means of administration or medication-taking behaviour¹.

Examples of monitored medicine-related problems

- Problems relating to the choice of monitored medicine prescribed or taken.
- Problems relating to the prescribed dose or dosing schedule of a monitored medicine.
- Problems relating to the way the patient takes the monitored medicine.
- Problems relating to actual or potential conditions that require management or prevention.
- Problems relating to monitoring the efficacy or adverse effects of a medicine.
- Problems relating to the presence of signs or symptoms that may be attributed to a monitored medicine.

Examples of clinical interventions

- **Recommendations for a change in therapy.**
- **Recommendations** for referral.
Unless it is an emergency situation, attempts should be made to contact the prescriber before referring the patient to other health service providers.
- **Provision** of information.
- **Recommendations for monitoring.**

To view further information, examples and guidance, view the Monitored Medicines Standard and Monitored Medicines Standard Companion Document on the Queensland Health website at: www.health.qld.gov.au

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ⁱ Adapted with permission from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, from: Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. Guidelines for pharmacists performing clinical interventions. A.C.T.: PSA; 2018.