Queensland Health

Repackaging medicines into a dose administration aid

Guidelines for registered nurses - version 1

Introduction and scope

This Guideline has been made by the chief executive, Queensland Health as referred to in Schedule 7, Part 3, Division 1, section 9 of the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 (Medicines Regulation) and contains the minimum requirements for repackaging medicines into a dose administration aid (DAA) by a registered nurse to manage the risks of this activity.

This Guideline applies to registered nurses, who fall within the class of persons described in Schedule 7, Part 3, Divisions 4 and 5 of the Medicines Regulation, who are authorised under the Medicines Regulation to give a treatment dose of a medicine to a patient. And further, this Guideline **only** applies to registered nurses who, as part of their employment or engagement by a Hospital and Health Service, are authorised to give a treatment dose in rural discharge circumstances or on a prescription and may undertake repackaging of medicines into a DAA.

DAAs are tamper-evident containers or packaging used to separate doses of a medicine for administration at particular times. Where at all possible, repackaging of medicines into DAAs should be carried out by a pharmacist in accordance with the Pharmacy Board of Australia *Guidelines on dose administration aids and staged supply of dispensed medicines* [1]. Repackaging a medicine by removing the oral medicine from its original manufacturer's packaging and repacking it into a DAA can assist people to take their medicines safely and support adherence. However, DAAs have a number of limitations, and there are risks associated with their use including repackaging unsuitable medicines, errors in packing and misuse of the DAA. A DAA should only be used when there is a clear and realisable beneficial health outcome for the patient.

If it is necessary to repackage the medicine for a particular patient to be given as a treatment dose into a DAA, the repackaging must be done in accordance with the requirements described in this Guideline. A term used in this Guideline that is defined in the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* (the Act) or the Medicines regulation has the meaning stated in the Act or Medicines Regulation.

Requirements

The following requirements apply to the class of persons described in Schedule 7, Part 3, Divisions 4 and 5 of the Medicines Regulation who are also employed or engaged as a registered nurse in a Hospital and Health Service.

1. A registered nurse may only repackage a medicine into a DAA if there is no pharmacist available to provide the DAA within the timeframe the DAA is required to be used by the patient.

[1] https://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/documents/default.aspx?record=WD15%2f17697&dbid=AP&chksum=ZyxagimMxcu67B7Mo7smvw%3d%3d

2. A registered nurse may only repackage medicines into a DAA if the type of DAA to be used is endorsed by the Director of Pharmacy at the Hospital and Health Service responsible for the health services provided by the registered nurse. DAAs where the compartments are re-usable, washable and not tamper-evident (for example a Dosett™ box) must not be used.
3. A registered nurse must only prepare DAAs in a clean and tidy facility with sufficient space, good lighting and temperature control. DAAs must not be prepared in a patient's home.
4. Registered nurses who will repackage DAAs must have received instruction from a pharmacist in the safe and reliable packing of DAAs.
5. The registered nurse repackaging the DAA must ensure that each medicine is suitable to be repackaged into a DAA. For example, that the medicine will not decompose by adsorbing moisture from the atmosphere.
6. The registered nurse must have access to, and follow, a documented procedure for safe repackaging of the specific type of DAA in use that includes:

- assessment and documentation of the patient's need for a DAA and of the patient's ability to use the specific type of DAA proposed;
- assessment of the suitability of medicines to be packaged in the DAA;
- circumstances when a registered nurse must confirm the decision to provide a DAA with a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or a pharmacist;
- steps to minimise unintended discrepancies in the contents of the DAA, including regular medicine reconciliation and checking for packing errors;
- the requirements for labelling a DAA; and
- the records to be made for each DAA prepared (a **filling record**) that includes:
  - the name of the person for whom the DAA is prepared;
  - the medicines packed including their batch/expiry date;
  - the date of repackaging;
  - the identity of the person who prepared the DAA; and
  - the date the DAA was checked and by whom.

7. A filling record should be retained for at least six (6) months.
8. DAAs prepared by a registered nurse under this Guideline must be used directly by the patient or their carer and not by another health professional as a repackaged form of medicine.

Version control

Version	Replaces version	Date approved	Commencement date
1	NA	12 August 2021	27 September 2021