D.5 PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS (PSWs) AND THE APPLICATION OF TREATMENT CREAMS

Some organizations ask PSWs to apply treatment creams because they have the best opportunity to ensure consistent application when providing personal care. The goal of these treatments is to address skin concerns before they worsen and become open areas. Registered staff, RN’s, RPN’s and NP’s, may delegate clearly identified treatment interventions and application of creams to a Personal Support Worker, provided:

- appropriate instruction/training has been given,
- competence to perform the procedure has been determined,
- and assessment of the prescribed intervention(s) occurs.

Each organization determines which treatment creams can be delegated, and will have written policies and procedures around how this is done.

A quality practice setting would ensure that:

1) All Physicians and Practitioners write treatment orders clearly identifying location of administration.
2) Residents receive all treatments and creams as ordered by a regulated health care professional.
3) All treatments and creams are received by the resident in a timely and safe manner.
4) All care is provided by a knowledgeable and competent care provider.
5) All care is properly assessed and suitable to the resident’s immediate care needs.
6) All care is provided with as much continuity of care as possible.

Treatment Application Procedure:

a) Wash hands.
b) Put on gloves.
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Prepare and administer cream/treatment(s) to the residents in a safe, effective and ethical manner, by verifying the “8 Rights” as follows:

- **The right resident.** Read the container label. Be sure the treatment is for the resident. Identify the resident.
- **The right treatment.** Read the label on the medication container. Check against the Treatment Administration Record (TAR).
- **The right reason.** The right treatment is ordered for the right resident.
- **The right dose.** Apply the correct amount product.
- **The right frequency.** To be given as often as ordered.
- **The right route.** *Topical application:* Apply to the skin or scalp according to the label.
- **The right site.** Apply to the area of the body, such as skin or scalp, according to the label.
- **The right time.** To be given at the correct time as ordered.

Document after administering the treatment. Initial the TAR after treatment completed. Document if treatment refused, held or not administered correctly.

If there has been any change to the prescription the label will have a “direction change, see chart” label across the directions. In this case check the Treatment Administration Record (TAR) to be sure of directions.

Using a tongue depressor to remove product from container, apply a small amount and rub in well. It is better to start with too little and apply more than to waste the product by applying too heavily or throwing extra in the garbage.

If the resident has more than one topical to be applied by a PSW, gloves must be changed between products in order not to contaminate one of the products.

**Personal Support Worker Responsibilities:**

The PSW will:

- Read the label on the medication container. Check against the TAR.
- Provide the treatment to the resident as delegated.
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- Observe and report to the Registered staff any changes and/or treatment concerns in the treatment area.

- Initial on the TAR.

- Report to the Registered staff if they do not feel competent to do the treatment and/or need help completing the treatment.

- Advise the Registered staff when the supply of treatment/cream is getting low.

- Report to the Registered staff if they make a treatment error.

References:


Joan Pollari, RPh, CGP iPharm Integrity Pharmacy. Topical Products to be applied by Health Care Aids. 2008.