

SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

NAME OF DOCUMENT	Administration of a formulation of a medication other than that ordered within an electronic medication management system
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FUNCTIONAL GROUP(S)	Nursing and Midwifery Pharmacy / Pharmaceutical
KEY TERMS	eMM, eMEDs, electronic medication management system, formulation, administration, medicine
SUMMARY	This procedure ensures that nursing/midwifery staff have appropriate flexibility in the choice of formulation when administering medications, whilst maintaining accountability for medication administration practices.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

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SESLHD PROCEDURE

Administration of a formulation of a medication other than that ordered within an electronic medication management system

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

[NSW Health Policy Directive PD2022_032 - Medication Handling](#) consolidates procedures and standards on medication procurement, storage, prescribing, supplying, dispensing and administration at NSW public health facilities with the requirements of the NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 and Regulation 2008, NSW Health policies and NSW Health directives relevant to medication handling.

This procedure ensures that nursing/midwifery staff have appropriate flexibility in the choice of formulation when administering medications, whilst maintaining accountability for medication administration practices.

2. BACKGROUND

The eMEDs electronic medication management system requires that a specific formulation be selected when ordering a medication. Occasionally the formulation ordered by the prescriber may be unsuitable for administration to the patient. This procedure describes the principles for management of these circumstances.

Changing the form of a medicine may alter the stability, safety, or effectiveness of some medicines to increase the risk of toxicity in some cases.

For the purposes of this procedure formulation is defined as the product or preparation in which the drug is presented, for example: solution, suspension, tablet, capsule, wafer.

This procedure applies to the formulation component of the medication order only. **It does not apply to other aspects of the medication order, i.e. drug, dose, route and frequency.**

This procedure does not apply to the following medications, for which the prescribed formulation should always be administered, or the prescription changed by an authorised prescriber:

- Phenytoin
- Lithium
- Clozapine
- Warfarin
- Thyroxine
- Posaconazole
- Digoxin
- Insulin
- Tacrolimus
- Mycophenolate
- Cytotoxic medications
- All Schedule 8 medications

Modified release and immediate release formulations must never be interchanged.

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other than that ordered within an electronic
medication management system**

SESLHDPR/767**3. RESPONSIBILITIES****3.1. Medical Officers** should

- Consider patient circumstances to ensure an appropriate formulation is selected when ordering medications in an electronic medication management system.

3.2. Pharmacists should:

- Review appropriateness of the formulation prescribed and ensure it is available for administration within a timely manner.
- Provide advice on choice of formulation, including additional handling, administration, storage or monitoring requirements, as necessary.

3.3. Nursing/Midwifery staff should:

- Consider patient circumstances to determine whether the prescribed formulation is suitable for the patient.
- Be aware of the need to comply with the prescriber's order and follow the principles within this business rule if the formulation in the medication order is deemed unsuitable.
- Consider that some formulations of the same medicine may not be interchangeable.

4. PROCEDURE

Prescribers should make every effort to prescribe the most appropriate formulation for the patient. This may require consultation with the nurse/midwife caring for the patient or a pharmacist.

Where specific instructions apply to administration of the prescribed formulation (e.g., disperse tablets in water) the prescriber should add these in the 'comments' field on prescribing. Pharmacists may also add these specific administration instructions to the order.

When administering the medication, the nurse/midwife should review the order and determine whether the prescribed formulation is suitable for the patient. Suitability will depend on factors such as:

- Availability of the prescribed formulation
- Availability of alternative formulations
- Patient's swallowing ability
- Patient's level of consciousness
- Presence and type of enteral feeding tube
- Patient preference

As these factors can change rapidly, an assessment of the suitability of the prescribed formulation should be made at each administration.

Refer to references such as MIMs to determine whether the medication may safely be crushed.

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If the prescribed formulation is suitable, administration should proceed in accordance with [NSW Health Policy Directive PD2022_032 - Medication Handling](#).

If the formulation is not suitable, two different scenarios may apply and should be managed as follows:

1. The prescribed formulation is likely to be unsuitable for all subsequent administrations.

Contact the prescriber to change the order to the most suitable formulation. If this cannot be done immediately, one dose of an alternative formulation of the medication may be administered against the order. A comment must be entered into the administration window detailing the formulation used.

OR,

2. The prescribed formulation is unsuitable for this administration, but likely to be suitable for subsequent administrations.

At the discretion of the nurse/midwife, one dose of an alternative formulation of the medication may be administered against the order. A comment must be entered into the administration window detailing the formulation used.

If in doubt as to whether two formulations of the same medication are interchangeable refer to the prescriber or pharmacist for advice.

Note: Under no circumstances should two separate orders be entered for different formulations via the same route.

This process applies to all inpatient medication orders where different formulations of the same medication are available.

Example ONE

eMEDs MAR medication order	
Paracetamol (paracetamol 500mg oral tablet) 1,000mg, oral, tablet* , QID, PRN for pain, Max dose/24 hrs: 4g	
Modifiable field:	tablet
Formulation which could be administered Oral suspension* or oral liquid*	
Non-modifiable fields:	drug, dose, route, frequency
<i>Note: modified release and immediate release formulations must never be interchanged.</i>	

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Example TWO

eMEDs MAR medication order Amoxicillin 1,000mg, oral, tablet* , BD	
Modifiable field:	tablet
Formulation which could be administered capsule* or oral liquid* or powder for reconstitution*	
Non-modifiable fields:	drug, dose, route, frequency

5. DOCUMENTATION

Not required

6. AUDIT

Review incident reports (IMs+)

7. REFERENCE

[NSW Health Policy Directive PD2022_032 - Medication Handling.](#)

8. VERSION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Version	Version and approval notes
27 February 2024	1.1	SESLHDBR/082 transferred to procedure template. SESLHD Business Rules no longer supported by SESLHD Policy Framework. Endorsed by SESLHD Drug and Therapeutics Committee.