STORAGE AND LABELLING OF INSULIN: INSULIN CARTRIDGE AND PEN INJECTION DEVICES

PURPOSE
- To ensure appropriate storage of inpatient’s prescribed insulin to guarantee efficacy of the medication is maintained.
- To provide a clear and consistent guideline to all wards to ensure inpatient’s insulin is stored correctly

Key Point
- Medications must be stored and administered in accordance with the manufacturer’s and pharmacist’s recommendations regarding temperature, exposure to light and expiry dates.

BACKGROUND
Cold chain supply ensures refrigerated medicines are stored at the World Health Organisation recommended temperature of between 2 and 8 degrees. Any breach in the cold chain can potentially result in chemical and or physical changes to the medication which may lead to a loss of efficacy and alter patient response and potentially cause harm to patients. In the event of a cold chain breach, medications must be discarded. It is essential that the pharmacy and wards involved in the handling of refrigerated medications for patient use maintain optimal conditions to provide a quality product to the patient.

PROCEDURE
Storing Insulin for an Inpatient
- Before use, keep the unopened insulin in a refrigerator where the temperature is between 2-8°C. Do not allow it to freeze. Discard if frozen.
- Once in use, the insulin should be kept in the refrigerator on obstetric wards or below 25°C in the patient drawer in all other wards.
- Discard the insulin within 28 days of first use.
- If the insulin is to be stored in the patient’s drawer write the date it is to be discarded on the addressograph label.
- Do not leave it near heat or in direct light.
Patient is admitted to ward and prescribed insulin

Did they bring their own insulin into hospital?

Yes

Are there storage concerns?
- Are there any visible particles?
- Has it been exposed to temperatures >25°C or < 2°C?
- Has it been in use for longer than 28 days?

No

Use Patients own insulin

If opening date is not known

Yes

Discard the insulin and provide a replacement

Expiration & Storage
- On the addressograph, write the discard date of the insulin (28 days after it was first opened).
- Store in patient locked medication cupboard/drawers at room temperature (<25°C) OR Store in the ward medicine refrigerator.

Expiry & Storage

No

Use Ward stock

Send chart down to pharmacy

Is the insulin on imprest?

Yes

Use Ward stock

Label
Label each insulin pen in use with patient’s addressograph sticker

No

Send chart down to pharmacy
P2.4.2

**REFERENCES (STANDARDS)**

National Standards – 4.3 The Clinical Workforce is supported for the prescribing, dispensing, administering, storing, manufacturing, compounding and monitoring of medicines

Legislation - Nil

Related Policies - Nil
Other related documents – Nil

**RESPONSIBILITY**

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