

CNO Medication Decision Tool – Condensed from [CNO.org](https://www.cno.org)

Authority: When an order is required and what to look for in an order

Ask yourself:

- Does this medication practice require an order?
- Is a controlled act involved?
- Does other legislation impact performing this in my workplace setting?
- Is the order clear, complete and appropriate? To help you answer this, use this decision tree.
- Are there any workplace policies about the medication practice that I need to consider?

Safety: Promoting safe care

Ask yourself:

- Have I considered the risk, contraindications and adverse reactions?
- What evidence informs my practice? (See the glossary in the Medication practice standard for the definition of evidence-informed.)
- What are the strategies to minimize the risk of harm?
- Are there supports to minimize harm if an adverse event occurs?
- Do I need to collaborate or consult with others? For example, the health care team or the client.
- Have I provided the client with education?
- Is the client informed?
- Has the client or substitute decision-maker been involved in the care planning?
- Are there system approaches that support safe medication practices available? For example, safe storage, reporting errors and strategies to reduce drug diversion.

Competence: Making sure you have the knowledge, skill and judgement to safely perform a medication practice

Ask yourself:

- Am I the appropriate care provider? Do I have the knowledge, skill and judgment?
- If you're not sure, consider what resources you need to answer this question. For example, look up drug references or best practices and guidelines.
- What evidence informs my practice?
- What organizational policies might influence my practice?
- Is the medication practice appropriate for my client?
- Is the medication practice appropriate for my workplace setting?
- Do I have the appropriate environmental supports, such as organizational guidelines, equipment and protocols, to administer and manage outcomes safely?
- Do I need to develop a Learning Plan related to this medication practice?

10 Rights of Medication Administration - actions

1. **Right Patient:**
 - Verify the patient's identity using at least two unique identifiers, such as name and date of birth.
 - Ask the patient to confirm their identity and check their identification bracelet, if applicable.
2. **Right Medication:**
 - Double-check the medication label against the medication order or prescription.
 - Ensure the medication is in its original packaging and hasn't expired.
3. **Right Dose:**
 - Calculate the correct dose based on the medication order.
 - Use appropriate measuring devices, such as calibrated syringes or cups.
4. **Right Route:**
 - Administer the medication via the prescribed route (e.g., oral, intravenous, intramuscular, subcutaneous).
 - Be aware of specific administration requirements for different routes.
5. **Right Time:**
 - Administer medications at the scheduled times prescribed by the healthcare provider.
 - Avoid giving medications too early or too late unless there's a valid reason for deviation.
6. **Right Documentation:**
 - Record medication administration accurately and promptly in the patient's medical record.
 - Include the date, time, dose, route, and any observations or patient responses.
7. **Right Reason:**
 - Verify the reason for administering the medication based on the patient's condition and healthcare provider's orders.
 - Ensure that the medication aligns with the patient's current medical needs.
8. **Right to Refuse:**
 - Respect the patient's autonomy and inform them about the medication's purpose and potential side effects.
 - If the patient refuses the medication, document their decision and report it to the healthcare team.
9. **Right Assessment:**
 - Assess the patient's allergies, current medications, and vital signs before administering medication.
 - Monitor for any contraindications or adverse reactions during and after administration.
10. **Right Education:**
 - Provide patient education about the medication, including how to take it, potential side effects, and any special instructions.
 - Encourage questions and address concerns to promote patient understanding and adherence.

The 3 checks for medication administration:

These are critical steps in ensuring patient safety and accuracy in the delivery of medications. These checks are performed at different stages of the medication administration process:

Before Preparing the Medication: This first check is done when reviewing the medication order, selecting the medication from the supply area, or comparing the medication label to the medication administration record (MAR) or the patient's chart. The aim is to verify the correct medication, dose, route, and time against the doctor's orders.

While Preparing the Medication: The second check occurs during the preparation of the medication. This involves re-checking the medication label against the MAR or patient chart, especially before removing the medication from its package or drawing up or measuring out the medication. It ensures that the correct medication is prepared for the right patient, at the correct dose and route.

Before Administering the Medication to the Patient: The third check is conducted at the patient's bedside or when presenting the medication to the patient. This final verification involves checking the medication once more against the MAR or patient chart, confirming the patient's identity (using two identifiers, such as name and date of birth or medical record number), and ensuring that it is the right time for the patient to receive the medication. This step is crucial for catching any potential errors before the medication is given to the patient.

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