

MEDICATION RECONCILIATION

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? BENEFITS FOR NURSES¹

Medication Reconciliation (MedRec) is a structured process in which Healthcare Providers partner with patients and their family/caregivers to obtain a complete and accurate, up-to-date list of the patient's medications which is then reconciled with admission, transfer and discharge orders.

As a nurse and patient advocate you are an integral part of MedRec and the benefits gained by participating are:

- **MedRec is a major patient safety initiative to improve communication about medications as patients transition through healthcare settings**
 - The Canadian Nurses Protective Society (2005) highlights that nurses, as both health care providers and patient advocates, play a key role in patient safety.
 - A study found that more than 1 in 9 emergency department visits were due to drug related adverse events (Zed, et al., 2008).
 - Another study showed 23% of discharged patients experienced an adverse event, 72% were adverse drug events. Of all, 50% were preventable and 17% resulted in readmission (Forster, et al., 2004).
 - 2012 MedRec AHS pilot audit identified an average of 1.2 discrepancies per chart audited.
- **MedRec can reduce workload, duplicate work and rework associated with medication management**
 - Nurses will spend less time tracking down and contacting prescribers to clarify and address discrepancies in medication orders.
 - After MedRec implementation, nursing time at admission was reduced by over 20 minutes per patient (Karnon, Campbell, & Czoski-Murray, 2009).
 - Although MedRec systems take time to design and implement, such systems are necessary to ensure provision of safe care (Barnsteiner, 2005).
- **MedRec leads to better collaborative communication and better information**
 - Often nurses are the central communication link between the patient and other members of the healthcare team (Canadian Nurses Protective Society, 2006).
 - Nurses are well positioned to take a lead in minimizing medication errors at patient care transition points using strategies such as MedRec and ensuring information is available to all providers (Barnsteiner, 2005).
 - As a nurse you have a role in educating clients about their medication regime, advocating for their needs and supporting them to be co-managers in their care (College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, 2007), and the MedRec process facilitates this.
- **MedRec is a shared professional responsibility**
 - A study on nurses' perceptions of medication safety highlighted the need for multidisciplinary teams to collaborate to ensure accurate medication lists for their patients. This same study speaks about clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each team member (Chevalier, Parker, MacKinnon, & Sketris, 2006).
 - Evidence suggests nurses are well positioned to intercept medication errors, which is also supported by a study showing RN's intercepted 86% of potential medication errors (Leape, et al., 1995).
- **When MedRec is completed with each transition of patient care, the patients and healthcare providers will have an accurate medication list (American Medical Association, 2007).**

¹ The term nurses includes RNs, RPNs, LPNs, Nurse Practitioners, etc.

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