

# Good Practice in Care Homes

This document has been produced by the Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups to support the safe and effective management of medicines within care homes.

## Topical Medicines

### Administering topical medication – key points

- Check product expiry date before use. Highlight any short expiry dates as a reminder to all staff.
- Many topical medicines should be discarded a certain period after opening. Record the date opened and calculate the 'use by' date and write this date on the medicine package or label. Sometimes packaging makes it difficult for the pharmacy label to be placed on the product (e.g. eye drops). In these circumstances the date opened and the 'use by' date should be written on the outer packaging. In such cases, it is essential that the product remains in the outer packaging throughout duration of this treatment.
- Any product whose appearance suggests it may be unfit for use should be discarded. If there is any doubt contact the community pharmacy / dispensary for advice.
- Use a Topical Medicines Application Record (TMAR) for recording administration of topical preparations and the 'use by' date information for topical medications. A suggested TMAR topical medicines application record sheet is attached.
- Gloves should always be used when applying topical medication.
- Ensure lids or tops of containers or tubes are replaced securely after use.


### Procedure for residents unable to apply their own prescribed topical medication

- A registered nurse or senior care assistant with appropriate training should complete a Topical Medicines Application Record (TMAR) for each topical medication prescribed. Ideally this should include a body map. The TMAR should be checked and countersigned.
- The TMAR should be kept in the resident's room.
- The care assistant, registered nurse or senior care assistant should sign the TMAR when they have applied a topical medicine in line with the instructions.
- The Medical Administration Record (MAR) chart should state 'see TMAR chart'.

- At the end of each 28 day cycle the TMAR should be attached to the corresponding MAR chart to provide a full record of administration.

## Expiry dates for topical preparations after opening



Some products show an expiry symbol e.g. . However, where this symbol is not present the following 'use by' dates are suggested:

Formulation and packing	Suggested 'use by' date after opening unless otherwise stated by manufacturer and still within manufacturer's expiry date	Rationale
Tubs of creams or ointments	One month	The contents are exposed and can become contaminated
Tubes of creams or ointments	Three months	Closed container, contents less exposed to environment
Pump dispenser packs of creams or ointment	Refer to manufacturer's expiry	Closed container, contents not openly exposed to environment
Tubs of cream specially made for individual	Seek community pharmacy or dispensary advice	Dependent on stability of product

## What quantities of cream or ointments are needed?

As a guide, the following table shows the difference in suitable quantities of topical creams or ointments compared to topical corticosteroids for an adult.

Area of the body	Creams and Ointments
<b>Face and neck</b>	15 - 30g
<b>Both hands</b>	15 - 30g
<b>Scalp</b>	15 - 30g
<b>Both arms</b>	30 - 60g
<b>Both legs</b>	100g
<b>Trunk</b>	100g
<b>Groin and genitalia</b>	15 - 30g

These amounts are usually suitable for an adult for a single daily application for two weeks

## Special advice for administering topical corticosteroids

Topical corticosteroids should be applied no more frequently than twice daily and should be spread

thinly and sparingly.

The length of cream or ointment expelled from a tube can be measured in fingertip units (FTU) (the distance from the fingertip to the first crease of the finger in an adult index finger).



One FTU is approximately 500mg of cream or ointment which is enough to cover an area that is twice that of the flat adult handprint (palm and fingers).

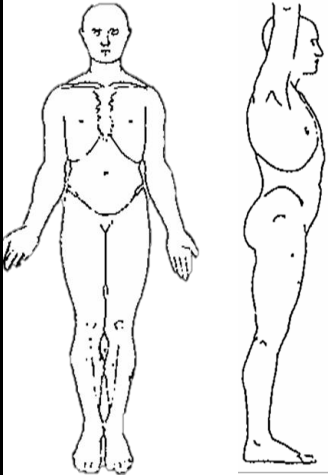
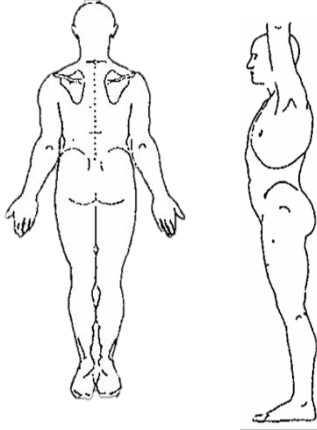
Area of skin to be treated (adults)	Fingertips units (FTUs) each dose (adults)
A hand and fingers (front and back)	1
Front of chest and abdomen	7
Back and buttocks	7
Face and neck	2.5
An entire arm and hand	4
An entire leg and foot	8

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## Acknowledgements

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# Topical Medicines Application Record Sheet

Name of Resident		Date of Birth	Room no.	GP Name	Allergies					
Name of Topical Preparation				Completed by	Checked by					
Site of application: <i>(mark on body map)</i>										
Frequency of application: <i>(e.g. daily or after washing)</i>										
Month		Start date		End date						
Application Timetable for 28 days									Body Map	
Date	Time	Signature	Time	Signature	Time	Signature	Time	Signature	<p><b>Front and right side</b></p>  <p><b>Back and left side</b></p> 	
Storage <i>(e.g. fridge)</i>		Date opened		'Use by' date after opening						