

Building the Medication List Best Practice Standards

“Medication reconciliation is not about filling out a form. A form is a tool to help document and guide the process. Instead, medication reconciliation is at its core a critical thinking function.”

(Institute for Healthcare Improvement, 2011)

Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP)
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)
Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)
VNAA Policy and Procedure Manual
Home Health VNA Policy #2047
CMS Conditions for Participation
Joint Commission
MA Board of Nursing



Adding medications to list

- Assure appropriate spelling: Enter first few letters and choose from populated list (the drug database). Medications from this list will be included in drug-drug and drug-allergy interaction checks
- Use generic **or** trade name to locate in database. *Enter the medication that the patient is actually taking in the home.*
- Ensure COMPLETE orders: A complete order contains ALL of the following:
 - Name of medication
 - Dose
 - Route
 - Frequency
 - If PRN, MUST contain reason
 - Prescribing physician when different from physician signing 485
- Minimize use of the “instructions” box. Use the tabs/dropdowns that contain the information to make a complete order. The instructions box should only be used when there is no other alternative to convey information.
- ***EVERY MEDICATION DOSE/ORDER NEEDS ITS OWN SEPARATE ENTRY! Don't write additional doses or frequencies in the instructions box of a medication entry.***

Tablet orders

- When a tablet strength with # of tablets are ordered:

Incorrect Order Entry:

"Tramadol 25mg tablet Take 2 tablets PO twice daily"

Correct Order Entry:

"Tramadol 50 mg PO twice daily"



- Write order as the **total dosage, not number of tablets** (refer to VNA policy #2047)

Range orders

- Should be based on the degree of the presenting symptom (Ex. moderate pain, severe pain) so include as separate entries if so ordered:
 - Percocet 1 tablet PO every 4 hours prn moderate pain (correct)
 - Percocet 2 tablets PO every 4 hours prn severe pain (correct)
- Cannot have a range for both the dose and frequency---must be one or the other:
 - Percocet 1-2 tablets PO every 4-6 hours (incorrect)
 - Percocet 1-2 tablets PO every 4 hours (correct)
 - Percocet 1 tablet PO every 4-6 hours (correct)

Inhalers and Nebulizers

Metered-Dose Inhalers

- The number of puffs is the dose (med is delivered within each puff); strength of medication can be added in instructions if indicated

Dry Powder Inhaler

(Spiriva, Advair Diskus)

- Enter the dose of the medication (med is delivered in its true form- Ex. 18mcg)

Nebulizers

- Indicate dose in milligrams; if mL's are given, can indicate in instructions.
- Combination nebulizers
Ex. DuoNeb can be written "0.5mg / 2.5mg inhalation" and state mL's in instructions



Eye Drops

- The number of drops is the dose
- You may put the strength of the medication in the instructions box if needed



Oral Solutions

- The dosage is the number of mg/grams to be given for each dose.
- The strength of the dose can be written in the instructions box with the ordered unit of measure

- **Example:**

Order: ValACYclovir 50mg/mL give 20mL PO TID

CORRECT: ValAcyclovir 1000mg PO TID

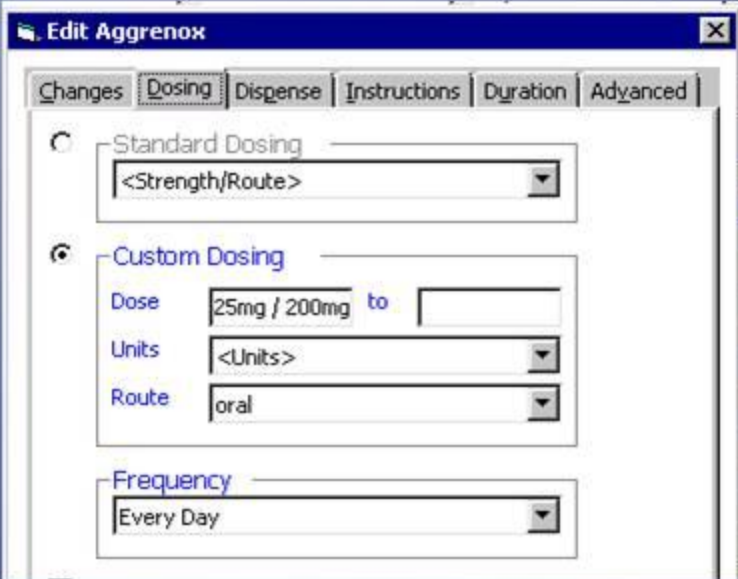
Instructions: 50mg/mL, give 20mL

The clinician will verify strength of med in the home



Combination Dose Meds

- Ex: “Percocet 5/325” is available in the database and has standard dosing option; choose custom dosing to enter # tabs.
- Ex: Aggrenox (aspirin with dipyridamole) has standard dosing option, but you may custom dose 25mg / 200 mg
→
- **Assure a space on either side of the slash “ / ” (to minimize confusing it with the number 1)**



The screenshot shows a software window titled "Edit Aggrenox" with a tabbed interface. The "Dosing" tab is active. There are two radio button options: "Standard Dosing" (unselected) and "Custom Dosing" (selected). Under "Standard Dosing", there is a dropdown menu with the text "<Strength/Route>". Under "Custom Dosing", there are three input fields: "Dose" containing "25mg / 200mg", "Units" containing "<Units>", and "Route" containing "oral". Below these is a "Frequency" dropdown menu containing "Every Day".

Topical Creams

- Identify strength of medication and where to apply if indicated
- Dose = number strength
- Units = %
- Instructions = site for application

Injectable Medications

- “Injectable” is a broad term which includes the routes SC, IM, IV, ID. It is NOT an acceptable route for administration
- *The medication order must specify the particular method SC, IM, IV, ID*

Order Sets Available

- Insulin Sliding Scale (4 different insulins)
- Prednisone Taper
- Coumadin (best for complex orders)
- Oxygen (continuous, HS, PRN)
- Flu Vaccine (High dose, Quadrivalent)
- IV flushes (NS, Heparin)

Complex orders

Tapering doses

- Each dose its own entry
- Use dates in “duration tab” and # days and then enter dates in comment box
- Utilize order set

Sliding Scale insulin

- Each dose and accompanying parameter set is its own entry
- Utilize order order set

Joint Commission “Do Not Use”

Official “Do Not Use” List¹

Do Not Use	Potential Problem	Use Instead
U, u (unit)	Mistaken for “0” (zero), the number “4” (four) or “cc”	Write “unit”
IU (International Unit)	Mistaken for IV (intravenous) or the number 10 (ten)	Write “International Unit”
Q.D., QD, q.d., qd (daily)	Mistaken for each other	Write “daily”
Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d, qod (every other day)	Period after the Q mistaken for “I” and the “O” mistaken for “l”	Write “every other day”
Trailing zero (X.0 mg)*	Decimal point is missed	Write X mg
Lack of leading zero (.X mg)		Write 0.X mg
MS	Can mean morphine sulfate or magnesium sulfate	Write “morphine sulfate” Write “magnesium sulfate”
M _{SO} ₄ and MgSO ₄	Confused for one another	

¹ Applies to all orders and all medication-related documentation that is handwritten (including free-text computer entry) or on pre-printed forms.

***Exception:** A “trailing zero” may be used only where required to demonstrate the level of precision of the value being reported, such as for laboratory results, imaging studies that report size of lesions, or catheter/tube sizes. It may not be used in medication orders or other medication-related documentation.