

Administration of Medications Prescribed as Variable/Split Doses

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Background

Medications are sometimes prescribed to allow variable dose amounts to be administered, up to a maximum total dose in a dose interval. This is specified in the fields “dose” and “frequency” for prn medications in the medication chart. Note this is distinct to the field “maximum dose in 24 hours”.

Scope/Audience

This mitigates the risk of medication overdose. The policy is intended for medication prescribers and medication administrators. The policy applies throughout CDHB to all uses of prescription medicines.

Associated documents

CDHB Fluid and Medication Manual (Vol 12)
MedChart training via user support

Policy

Split or Variable dosing will only apply to PRN medication
CDHB policy is that repeat dosing within the dose interval is allowed but the maximum prescribed dose amount may not be exceeded in any given time period.
For example ondansetron prescribed 4-8 mg orally 8 hourly. If 4 mg of ondansetron is administered at 0800 hrs an additional 4 mg may be administered at any time subsequently (e.g. at 1000 hrs.)

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At 1600 hours a further 4 mg could be administered but an 8 hours interval from the last dose administered would be required before administering a dose of 8 mg (that is not before 1800 hours.)

A maximum dose per 24 hours must be prescribed to prevent overdosing for PRN medication.

Administrators must consider drug dose maximums when the prn drug is also prescribed regularly.

Administrators must refer to the prescriber for clarification regarding any confusion over charting or dose administration time periods.

In general, CDHB discourages variable/split dose prescribing in this form if it is not necessary.

For further information and background refer to “Administration of Medications Prescribed as Variable/Split Doses” on the Emeds SharePoint site.

Training and Education

Prescriber’s and administrators using variable/split dosing will have training on how to prescribe and administer in Med Chart.

Measurement/Evaluation

This policy will be audited during medication safety audits assessing doses of medications administered and via medication utilisation reports from ePrescribing data. Individual units may audit practice.

Policy Owner	Medicines Advisory Committee Chair
Policy Authoriser	Clinical Director Clinical Pharmacology Chief Medical Officer
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