**Homely Remedies - COVID-19 Preparedness in care homes**

In an aim to ensure care homes are as prepared as they can be in the event of an outbreak or widespread transmission of COVID-19, we recommend the following advice to all care homes:

* Check homely remedies stock quantities and order what you anticipate your residents may need for the following weeks for cold and flu symptoms such as fever or aches and pains.
* Paracetamol is commonly used for cold and flu symptoms such as fever and pain. We advise you to purchase this through your supplying pharmacy.
* Due to the additional pressures on pharmacies at present do not wait until you run out before ordering, try to give your pharmacy enough notice. Consider the number of residents not routinely prescribed paracetamol based painkillers.
* As always avoid stock piling, these actions may put a strain on the supply chain and exacerbate any potential shortages.
* Do not discard medications unnecessarily, please follow the manufacturer’s expiry date.
* For those residents with swallowing difficulties, paracetamol 250mg/5ml suspension can be purchased over the counter.
* Please remember many prescribed medicines and OTC products already contain paracetamol as part of a combination. Check the packaging or speak to your pharmacy for advice.
* Ibuprofen or Aspirin is not recommended as an alternative to paracetamol for fever or pain as a homely remedy due to increased risk of adverse effects with these drugs in the frail elderly.
* Check expiry dates of all current homely remedies stocks and replenish stock of other potentially required medications, e.g. Simple linctus.
* If a resident has cold and flu symptoms that last longer than 48 hours, we recommend you check with the resident’s GP whether to continue giving paracetamol for an additional 48 hours. Follow the advice given to you and record the advice given in the resident’s care plan.
* Ensure all doses of homely remedies are recorded in your homely remedies record book, the MAR chart and/ or in the resident’s care plan in accordance with the care home medicines management policy.
* Residents can purchase their own over-the-counter products if they wish. This can also be done via your supplying pharmacy. It is important that the resident informs a trained member of staff and seeks advice from the pharmacist to check that it is safe and appropriate for the individual. This may be an alternative option if your care home does not currently have a homely remedies policy in place.

For further advice on how to manage homely remedies, please refer to the Surrey Prescribing Advisory Database (PAD): <https://surreyccg.res-systems.net/PAD/Guidelines/Detail/4951> or alternatively refer to the CQC website.

**References:**

Surrey PAD (2019) *Guidelines: Homely remedies* [Online] Available from: <https://surreyccg.res-systems.net/PAD/Guidelines/Detail/4951> [Accessed 08/04/20]