

# Medication Assistance Activity Sheet: Topical Medication


## MAP Level 2 & 3: Medication Assistance Activity Sheet

This activity sheet guides unregulated health care providers when assisting with topical medication.

check	Activity
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The <b>First Medication Safety Check</b> is done by the regulated health care provider who verifies the completeness and appropriateness of the prescriber's order (e.g., dispensing pharmacy or nurse)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduce yourself and review the client's care plan/medication record for instructions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perform hand hygiene and gather the required supplies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• topical medication</li> <li>• non-sterile gloves</li> <li>• warm water or saline and gauze pads or face cloth for cleaning as directed on care plan</li> <li>• other items as per care plan: e.g., other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required, clean wooden stick or cotton-tipped applicator, clean gauze pad, tissue, etc.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perform the <b>Second Medication Safety Check</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• check for allergies and alerts on the medication label and care plan/medication record</li> <li>• check the expiry date and/or beyond use date of the medication</li> <li>• check &amp; compare the medication rights* on the medication label and care plan/medication record</li> <li>• report any discrepancies or incorrect/unclear information to the supervisor immediately; do not proceed until concerns are resolved</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare the medication according to instructions on the care plan/medication record <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• perform hand hygiene</li> <li>• check that the medication container is not cracked or leaking. Visually inspect the contents for particles or discoloration (when able).</li> <li>• verify the medication is labelled for external topical use</li> <li>• prepare medication as directed in the care plan (e.g., shake before use)</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perform the <b>Third Medication Safety Check</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the client using two (2) unique client identifiers</li> <li>• explain the activity to the client</li> <li>• check the medication rights* comparing the medication label and care plan/medication record</li> </ul>
<p><b>* Medication rights:</b> right client, right medication, right time, right dose, right route, right documentation, right of refusal. Unregulated health care providers are not required to know the "right reason" when providing medication assistance as directions on the care plan are followed.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide MAP Level 2 or 3 assistance as per the care plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• don non-sterile gloves and other PPE as required</li> <li>• if directed on the care plan, clean</li> <li>• position the client for medication assistance (e.g., client seated with skin area exposed)</li> <li>• apply the medication according to the type (e.g., cream or ointment from a tube or jar, powder, liquid, spray, or shampoo) and directions on the care plan               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ apply cream or ointment in the direction of hair growth</li> <li>○ direct powders or sprays away from the person's face to reduce inhalation</li> <li>○ avoid liquid medication (e.g., shampoo) from contact with the client's eyes or mouth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete the activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discard of used supplies and clean reusable equipment (if used)</li> <li>• perform hand hygiene</li> <li>• complete documentation</li> <li>• report observations as instructed on the care plan, or issues/concerns to the supervisor</li> </ul>



## Tips

Topical medication from a jar	Topical medication from a tube
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open the jar and place the lid upside down on a clean surface</li> <li>A clean wooden stick such as a tongue depressor is used to remove the required amount of medication and then placed onto a gloved hand (non-sterile gloves are worn) for application</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The care plan may direct that a cotton-tipped applicator be used to apply a small amount directly to an area</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> DO NOT dip the wooden stick or cotton-tipped applicator into a jar more than once. Get a new applicator if additional medication is needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove the cap from the tube and place it upside down on a clean surface</li> <li>Squeeze and discard a small amount from the tube and wipe off with a clean tissue or gauze</li> <li>Squeeze the required amount from the tube onto a gloved hand (non-sterile) for application</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The care plan may direct that a gauze pad or cotton-tipped applicator be used to apply the medication to an area</li> </ul> 
Powder topical medication	Liquid topical medication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open the container and place the lid upside down on a clean surface</li> <li>Apply the powder onto a clean gloved hand (non-sterile gloves) for application</li> </ul> <p><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The care plan may direct to apply powder to a gauze pad for application</li> <li>Direct powder application away from the client's face to reduce inhalation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shake the medication before use</li> <li>Open the container and place the lid upside down on a clean surface</li> <li>Pour the required amount into a clean gloved hand (non-sterile gloves) for application</li> <li>Avoid contact with the client's eyes or mouth</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> refer to the care plan for how long to leave medicated shampoo on before rinsing</p>
Aerosol spray medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place the date the medication is opened on the label, use by the "best before" date or expiry date</li> <li>Apply topical medication after the client's bath, or cleanse and dry the site before applying the medication</li> <li>Refer to the care plan for the exact location amount to apply (e.g., dime-size)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shake the medication before use</li> <li>Open the container and place the lid upside down on a clean surface</li> <li>Direct the spray away from the client's face to reduce inhalation</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> wear a mask to reduce inhalation of powder or spray during application</p>	

References:

- Alberta Health & Wellness (2013). *Health Care Aide Provincial Curriculum: Course 6-Module 1: Assisting with Medication Delivery*
- Topical skin drug application (2022, May 19). *Lippincott Procedures*. <https://procedures-lww-com.ahs.idm.oclc.org/lnp/home.do?setCookie=2948>

**Note:** When providing MAP Level 1 (reminder), the unregulated health care provider does not handle or prepare medication for the client. Therefore, they do not perform the medication rights or perform safety checks.