

## **Topical Administration Guidance**

### **Administering topical medication – Key Points:**

- Check expiry date before use
- Highlight any short expiry dates as a reminder to all staff
- Record the date opened and the calculated expiry on the medicine package/label. Some packaging does not allow for the pharmacy label to be placed on the product e.g. eye drops. In these circumstances the outer packaging will have to be endorsed with the date of opening. 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.
- Use a Topical Medicines Application Record (TMAR) for recording administration of topical preparations and expiry date information for topical medications. A suggested topical medicines application record sheet is enclosed.

### **Procedure for service users unable to apply their own prescribed topical medication:**

- A Registered Nurse or Senior Care Assistant should complete a Topical Medicines Application Record (TMAR) for each topical medication prescribed. As it is a handwritten document it should be countersigned. Ideally this should include a body map.
- 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 medicines in line with the prescription 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
- Gloves should always be used when applying topical medication

### **Table of Suggested Expiry of Topical preparations from Date of Opening**

**NB** Due to the lack of available evidence on generic expiry dates of creams/ointments the following expiry dates are suggested

<b>Formulation and packing</b>	<b>Suggested expiry after opening unless otherwise stated by manufacturer and still within manufacturer's expiry date</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Tubs of creams/ointments	1 month	The contents are exposed and can become contaminated
Tubs of creams/ointment decanted from bulk container	1 month or seek community pharmacy or dispensary advice	As above and decanting from bulk container into another container could introduce contamination
Tubs of cream specially made for individual	Seek community pharmacy or dispensary advice	Dependant on stability of product
Tubes of creams/ointments	3 months	Closed container, contents less exposed to environment
Pump dispenser packs of creams/ointment	Manufacturer's expiry	Closed container, contents not openly exposed to environment

Some products now show an expiry symbol. However, in the care home setting where storage conditions may be variable it is recommended that the above suggested expiry dates are followed.

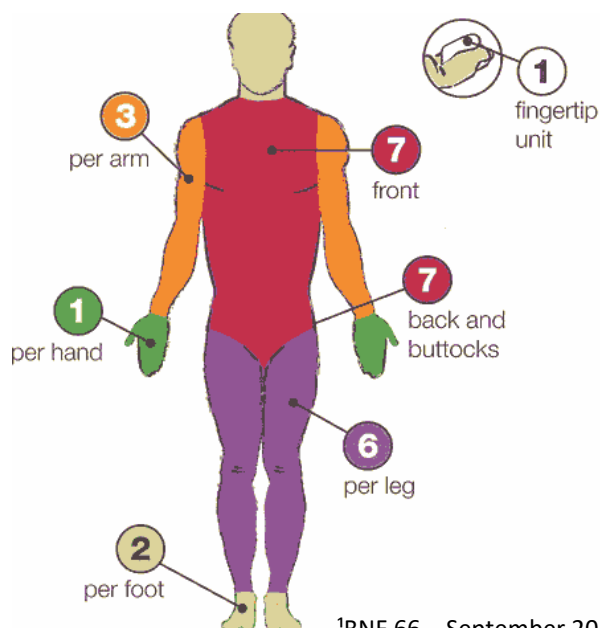
Any products whose appearance suggests it may be unfit for use should be discarded – irrespective of expiry date. If there is any doubt contact the community pharmacy/dispensary for advice.

As a guide the following table shows the difference in suitable quantities of topical creams/ointments as opposed to topical corticosteroids for an adult:

AREA OF BODY	CREAMS/OINTMENTS Twice daily application		CORTICOSTEROIDS Single daily application	
	Per Week	Per Month	Per Week	Per Month
Face	15-30g	60-120g	8-15g	30-60g
Both hands	25-50g	100-200g	8-15g	30-60g
Scalp	50-100g	200-400g	8-15g	30-60g
Both arms	100-200g	400-800g	15-30g	60-120g
Both legs			50g	200g
Trunk	400g	1600g	50g	200g
Groins and genitalia	15-25g	60-100g	8-15g	30-60g

Special advice for administering topical corticosteroids:

These should be applied no more frequently than twice daily and should be spread thinly. The length of cream or ointment expelled from a tube can be measured in “fingertip units” (the distance from the fingertip to the first crease of the finger in an adult index finger), One “fingertip unit” (approximately 500mg of cream or ointment) is enough to cover an area that is twice that of the flat adult handprint (palm and fingers). <sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>BNF 66 – September 2013

Resources:

Continuing Professional Pharmacy Education (CPPE) Supporting Care Homes in Medicines Management April 2007  
Expiry dates Sheffield care homes steering group 2010

# Topical Medicines Application Record Sheet

[illegible]