

## General Discussion:

Medication monitoring addresses questions like:

- Is the medication working? To answer that question, the reason for using the medication must be known; the goals of treatment must be known; and data must be collected. In some cases facility staff may play a critical role in determining if a medication is working. For example, when a medication is being used for pain with the goal to reduce pain, staff at the facility can collect data related to the pain the resident may be experiencing. That data can be used to determine if different or more medication may be needed. In some cases, the data that is collected may be more isolated like a blood level for the medication. In these cases medication monitoring for effectiveness may be in the hands of the physician. It is important for facility staff to know what a medication is being used for and the goals for treatment. Often times the facility will need to have a role in collecting data so that a determination of the medication's effectiveness can be made.
- Is the medication causing adverse effects? To answer this question, common potential adverse effects for medications need to be known. Facility staff who know some of the potential adverse effects of medications can have a vital role in notifying physicians, pharmacists etc. that the resident may be experiencing a medication adverse effect. Some adverse effects are easily identified like a rash or hives. Other medication adverse effects may be subtle like increased confusion or less sleep. Facility staff generally will know a resident very well and can identify potential adverse effects and notify appropriate individuals so that an intervention can be made.
- Are medications that a resident takes contributing to falls? Falls can occur for many reasons and medications may increase the risk of falls. For example, some medications may lower blood pressure, causing dizziness when a resident rises quickly from a sitting or lying position. This dizziness may cause the resident to fall. Another example is a diuretic (water pill), which results in more frequent urination. A resident who is weak may attempt to get up and go to the bathroom independently, which may result in a fall.

Resources:

Preventing Falls; How to Develop Community-based Fall Prevention Program for Older Adults <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/index.html>

Preventing Falls: What Works A CDC Compendium of effective community-based interventions from around the world  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/index.html>

Falls and Fall Risk - Clinical Practice Guideline from the American Medical Directors Association <http://www.amda.com/tools/clinical/falls.cfm>

Walking Tall In Assisted Living: Your Guide to Falls Management in Wisconsin –  
<http://www.ewala.org>

Resources on medications and falls:

[http://www.stopfalls.org/service\\_providers/sp\\_mm.shtml](http://www.stopfalls.org/service_providers/sp_mm.shtml)

<http://www.pharmscope.com/ptjournal/fulltext/28/11/PTJ2811724.pdf>

<http://www.mnfallsprevention.org/consumer/medications.html>