

# MEDICINES UPDATE

## Care Homes October 2015

### DON'T waste medicines!

Think before you throw away medicines at the end of the cycle.

If the medicine:

- is still in date
- is still prescribed
- looks fit for use
- has been stored correctly

**It can be carried forward to the next 28-day cycle<sup>1</sup>.**

Unless the manufacturer specifies a shorter expiry date, please use the following guidance:

	<p><b>PRN and regular tablets and capsules</b> dispensed in the original packaging can be used until the manufacturer's expiry date.</p>
	<p><b>Liquids</b> dispensed in their original bottles can be used for 6 months after they have been opened.</p>
	<p><b>Inhalers</b> can be used until the manufacturer's expiry date. To tell if an inhaler is empty, use the dose counter or work out how many doses have been used from the MAR chart. Keep one spare reliever inhaler available.</p>
	<p><b>Insulin</b> can be stored in the fridge unopened until the expiry date. Keep insulin that is in use at room temperature (under 25°C) as this will make it more comfortable to inject. Once opened insulin can be stored outside of the fridge for up to 28 days<sup>2</sup>.</p>
	<p><b>Oral nutritional supplements</b> can be used until the manufacturer's expiry date.</p>
	<p><b>Topical creams and ointments</b> can be used for 3 months after they have been opened. If creams and ointments last for more than 3 months, refer to the GP to review if product is still needed or is being used appropriately. Consider a smaller pack size.</p>

**Remember to clearly state the date opened on liquids, inhalers, insulin, creams and ointments.**

**References:**

- (1) NICE Guidelines SC1 Managing medicines in care homes
- (2) <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/Information-for-parents/Diabetes-care/Insulin/Storing-insulin/> accessed 3/11/15