



High Desert Health System POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 393
VERSION: 1

SUBJECT: EXPIRATION DATING OF OPEN PHARMACEUTICAL CONTAINERS

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for the handling of expiration dating of pharmaceutical containers.

POLICY: Expired medications shall be removed from stock and safely discarded in accordance with the Pharmaceutical Waste Management Program **prior to expiration date** that does not specify the day of the month shall be interpreted to mean the last day of the month.

PROCEDURE:

1. In addition to the monthly inspection conducted by a pharmacist, the nursing staff on each clinical area that utilizes medications shall
 - A. make a routine inspection of dated medications at least monthly and whenever receiving medications from the pharmacy.
 - B. remove medications from stock prior to the date and return unopened medication to the pharmacy for safe disposal
2. Open pharmaceuticals including partial doses of medications that remain after a medication dose has been administered to the patient shall be safely discarded following the pharmaceutical Waste Management Program.
 - A. Non-Sterile Products
 - 1) Bulk bottles, requiring or not requiring reconstitution or alteration, should be discarded according to the manufacturers recommended expiration date.
 - 2) Glucose Urine Test and other in-vitro diagnostic aids should be discarded six (6) months after opening unless stated otherwise by the manufacture.
 - 3) Nitroglycerine tablets (sublingual) should be discarded six (6) months after opening the bottle. The cotton inside the bottle should be discarded upon opening and date of opening recorded on the bottle.
 - B. Sterile Products
 - 1) Ampules should be discarded immediately after initial use.
 - 2) Single dose vials and containers should be discarded after single use.
 - 3) Multi-dose vials should be discarded when empty, when suspected or visible contamination occurs, or when the manufactures stated expiration date is reached; with the one exception being Tuberculin Purified Protein Derivative

POLICY NO: 393	SUBJECT: EXPIRATION DATING OF OPEN PHARMACEUTICAL CONTAINERS	Page 2 of 2
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(PPD) and insulin vials, which should be discarded 30 days after the opening date.

- 4) Neuromuscular blockers requiring refrigeration must be dated upon removed and can be used for the following period at room temperature:

Atracurium	14 days
Pancuronium	6 months
Rocuronium	30 days
Succinylcholine	14 days

- 5) Commercially available solutions, suspensions and products requiring reconstitution expire according to the manufactures expiration date.
6) Viaflex parenteral plastic containers (plain IVPBs) must be dated upon removal from the overwrap and shall be discarded after the time periods listed below when out of the overwrap pouch.

<u>Unit Volume (ml)</u>	<u>Days</u>
50 ml or less	15 days
100 ml or greater	30 days

C. Irrigation Fluids shall be discarded at the end of each shift. Exceptions: antimicrobial irrigating solutions compounded by pharmacy shall be discarded according to the expiration date stated on the pharmacy label.

ATTACHMENT: Expiration Dating of the Open Pharmaceutical Containers Chart

AUTHORITY/ REFERENCE:

- Guideline for Prevention of Intravascular Device-Related Infections. Web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/iv/iv.htm>, 2002.
- Hebel, S., et al. Drug Facts and Comparisons Updated Monthly. Facts and Comparison, A Wolters Kluwer Company. St.Louis, MO, 2002.
- United States Pharmacopeia, 23rd edition. National Formulary, 18th edition. United States Pharmacopeial Convention, Inc. Rockville, MD, 1995.
- Viaflex Plastic Container Storage Recommendation, Information Center, Baxter Healthcare Corporation, 2007.

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