

Clarifying Information for MM.4.10 and Oral Contrast Media

The following information is being provided by the Joint Commission based on organizations' requests for information about the applicability of Medication Management standard MM.4.10 to the administration of oral contrast agents.

Contrast media are considered a medication. The administration of oral contrast media without prior pharmacist review has been determined to be safe, a standard of practice by pharmacists and the American College of Radiology, and acceptable to the Joint Commission. While review by a pharmacist before administration remains a recommended safety step, contrast media can be safely administered orally in an inpatient or outpatient setting as long as the following standards and safe guards are followed*:

- The organization adopts clinical practice guidelines or approved screening tools to address the safe administration of contrast media (LD.4.20). In the case of hospitals, the clinical practice guideline or screening protocol must be approved by the medical staff and pharmacy.
- Only trained, designated individuals retrieve medications from a limited set of medications (MM.4.50, EP 2)

- The appropriateness of the medication (contrast media) is reviewed by a health care professional determined to be qualified (MM.4.10, EP 3)
- The organization implements quality control procedures to prevent retrieval errors (MM.4.50, EP 2)
- A pharmacist is available on-call if needed (MM.4.50, EP 2)
- Retrospectively, the organization evaluates its system by sampling records where contrast media were administered without prior pharmacy review to determine if the system as designed is working or if there are opportunities for improvement (MM.8.10)

This does not include situations in which the pharmacy is sent an order to dispense a contrast agent to the inpatient floor for administration in non-urgent testing. In this situation, a review of the order is not only possible, but usually a part of the normal processing of medication orders by the pharmacist. In such cases, a review of the order is expected.

For additional information regarding this standard and all other standard-related questions, please contact the Joint Commission's Standards Interpretation Group at 630/792-5900. ▲

* Please note these standards are not limited to oral contrast media.