

How to Conduct a Brown Bag Medicine Review Day

Overview

The "Brown Bag Review" of medicines is a common practice that involves encouraging participants to bring all of their medicines and supplements to the event and reviewing them. The goal is to determine what medicines participants are taking and how they are taking them. The process can identify medicine errors and misunderstandings that would otherwise be overlooked. Although many practices conduct medicine reconciliation using information in the medical record or as reported by the participant, a Brown Bag Medicine Review is more thorough as it includes medicines that may not be documented in the medical record, and will often reveal duplicate, expired, and medicines prescribed to others.

We estimate that you will spend 15-20 minutes for each participant. Each session should be informative. Share very basic information, since you do not have each participant's medical history. Encourage participants to follow up with their physician and/or pharmacist about what you share with them. Reinforce the 3 take away points below as often as you can.

Three main take-away points

Each time the Delmarva Team conducts a Brown Bag Medicine Review Day we try to reinforce and engage each participant on the following points:

1. **Know your medicines** and why they are taking them.
2. **Keep an accurate and up to date list of your medicines** and carry it with you at all times.
 - Encourage participants to use the "Med-check Passport booklet that you will help them fill out and to use this as their medicine list.
3. **Take the Brown Bag to every health care provider appointment** with *all* their medicines (prescribed and over the counter) and Med-check Passport list in the bag.

The following is how the Delmarva Foundation QIO sets up their MedicineReview Day and can be used as example for conducting one in your community or facility.

I. Check-in

- Have a registration table with a numbered sheet for participants to sign in. Give participants the number that corresponds to their name on the sign in sheet.
 - If you plan to have several Medicine Review Days in your community Make sure the sign in sheet has a date and facility name on it so you can refer back if needed.
- We generally plan to have two staff persons sit at the registration table with a chairs at each end for participants. The registration staff fills out the demographic section and questions 1-7 on the *Participant Medicine Review Form*. This allows the healthcare professionals more time to review the participant's medicines. Participants are then given their Review Form to give to the healthcare professional when they are called.
- Registration table staff calls participants by number to see the next available healthcare professional to do the review.

- We advise you not give out the **“brown bags”** until the participant complete the review and fills out the participant evaluation. That generally insures that they will complete the process.
- If you have a lot of participants waiting to complete their medicine review, we generally have one of the registration staff, use this time to educate the group on some of the following:
 - Provide a brief overview of the items they will receive in their Bag (Medicine Passport – med list, immunization (flu, pneumococcal, shingles) bookmark/flyer, disease/topic of the month) and its importance.
 - Review the pamphlet entitled: **“TALK – to reduce Hospital Readmissions”** which was designed by Delmarva Foundation.

Additionally, we have a CD with pertinent educational information that we load on our laptops and we play in a loop during the waiting time.

II. Prepare for the review

- **Ask the participant all the questions** on the 1st page of the Participant Medicine Review form. Participants may choose not to answer the questions, which are fine, but we try to write that on the form for later analysis.
- **Fill in as much information as possible** if this has not already been done and write clearly. The Delmarva team assesses the information for stats about each Brown Bag Day and shares the general information with our community coalition.
- Thank participants for coming to the review and set out all the participant’s medicines when they get to your station/table.

III. Perform the review.

- Ask the participant to pick up each medicine bottle, and ask the participant:
 - Please read the name of the medicine from the label.
 - What do you take this medicine for?
 - When do you take this medicine?
 - How do you take the medicine? (with food or water)
 - Can you tell me how much you take each time?
- **Throughout the process, use the word “medicine,” rather than “medication.”** Medicine is a common word and is more likely to be understood by all participants.
 - Ask if they are taking herbal medications?
- If they are not taking their medicine as prescribed try to find out why ... ask questions like:
 - Are you having a problem taking this medicine? If so can you explain what the problem is? Are you afraid to take your medicine?
 - Delmarva writes down all responses for our statistics.
- **The Med-check Passport** will be at each review table and the health care professional should write each medicine with its dose and time taken in the passport for the participant. Write clearly and legibly and not in cursive.

IV. Clarify medicine instructions.

- Clarify what the participant should be doing based on the information that is on the medicine bottle. Use common, everyday words and provide precise instructions ("Take 1 pill in the morning and 1 pill at bedtime.").
- Use the Teach-Back Method to confirm participant understanding. Ask the participant to **describe how they are going to follow these instructions?**
- **Information to Remember page** is given to each participant at the end of the review by the health care professional. The list states the basics of what they did in the review and things we want them to remember.

- **Re-emphasize the three take away points with each participant:**
 1. Know your medicines and why you are taking them.
 - Reinforce that they don't have to know them by memory but if they have a list with them they can always read them off.
 2. Keep an accurate and up to date list of your medicines.
 - Emphasize that the "the Med-Check Passport" now has the list of medicines they have provided to us or told us about.
 - Encourage them to maintain and update this list of meds as needed and to keep this list in the "Brown Bag" we will give them.
 3. Take the Brown Bag with all prescribed meds and over the counter meds **to all healthcare appointments.**
 - Keeping all their meds in the bag allows them to easily find and take their medicines to every medical visit they have ... whether their primary care physician's office or if they are rushed to the emergency room.
 - Pill counters can be filled each week from the bottles that are located in the brown bag.
 - New prescription bottles should be added to the bag.

V. Expired Meds

- At each station will also be plastic baggie's with an "expired medicines" label. If the participant has expired medicine bottles place them in the baggie.
- Emphasize the safety issues of taking expired medicines and suggest the participants confirm with their doctors and pharmacists the medicine is expired.
- Please review the reason for the expiration. Such as:
 - Is the medicine no longer part of their regimen?
 - Please ensure that the individual has not poured contents from a new prescription bottle into an expired prescription bottle.
 - Emphasize that once they have confirmed that the medicine is no longer required and/or is expired to properly dispose of the medicines. In the District of Columbia

we provide participants with a Department of Health/Board of Pharmacy flyer with local sites for expired medicine disposal.

VI. Wrap Up

- If the bag contents have not been reviewed with the group as a whole during the waiting time (and if time allows) then the health care professional can briefly review pamphlets that are in the bag:
 - Med-Check Passport with immunization record list
 - Immunization (flu, pneumococcal, shingles) bookmark and/or flyer
 - Flyer on Disease/topic of the month)
 - TALK: to Reduce Hospital Readmissions Brochure
- Once the session is finished the healthcare professional will then refer the participant back to the registration desk (if you follow this set-up). They will fill out a **Participant Evaluation Form** at this point and a very important part of our feedback. Volunteers will ask if there are any additional questions. Delmarva QIO staff looks to see if there were any specific issues noted by the healthcare reviewer and asks the participant if they wouldn't mind a follow-up call to see how they are doing with the recommendations. At this point we then give the participant the bag. Bags are only given to those who complete the entire Review and only one bag to each participant since we have a limited number of bags.

The Delmarva QIO team hopes that this toolkit will be useful in starting a Brown Bag Medicine Review Day in your community. Please feel free to contact any of us if you should have any questions.

Jenn and Kea Should I add the forms on to this???

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