

# Keeping our elderly safe in aged care – **MEDICATION MANAGEMENT**



If you have a family, friend or loved one in an aged care facility you should know about safe medication management – it might just save a life.

## Why should only RNs and ENs administer medications?

Medications should only be administered by RNs and ENs because only they have the comprehensive training, knowledge and experience to do this important role safely.

RNs and ENs can identify medication side-effects, make decisions about when (and when not) to give medication, when to talk to the resident's medical practitioner, and above all, to do this safely.

**AINs and PCs do NOT know what drugs they are giving, or why – it is not safe for employers to make them administer medications.**

## Who's responsible for what?

- **Registered Nurses** are educated to be aware of the benefits and potential hazards in the use of medicines and to administer medicines safely and legally, as well as to monitor their efficacy and identify any adverse effects.
- **Enrolled Nurses** work under the direction and supervision of Registered Nurses and practice within legislative and regulatory requirements. Most Enrolled Nurses may administer medicines because they have undertaken education in medicines similar to RNs.
- **AINs and PCs** are not registered or licenced and only have basic health training. These carers do not know the drugs they are giving, so they may assist aged care residents with self-administering their medications from pre-packaged dose administration aids. They should not be directed by employees or facility staff to practice outside of this role.

## Ensure your loved one is given medications safely

1. Clearly indicate in writing to the aged care facility you only want RNs and ENs to administer medications to your loved one.
2. If PCs or AINs are giving medications at the facility where your loved one resides, ask the facility manager why. RNs are accountable for what carers do and should be the ones administering medication in conjunction with ENs. However, they are often improperly directed to pass on this responsibility.
3. Complain in writing if you discover your loved one is being given medications by a carer rather than a RN or EN. Express your concerns to facility management or the organisation.
4. If your wishes are not complied with, raise a concern with the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner ([www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au](http://www.agedcarecomplaints.gov.au)) and your state and federal political representatives.

