

Tool 10. Brown bag medication review

The “Brown Bag Review” of medications is a common practice that encourages patients to bring all of their medications and supplements to medical appointments. This provides clinical staff with an opportunity to review and discuss the medications that the patient is taking. Reviewing medications with your patient may help you to:

- Answer the patient’s questions.
- Verify what the patient is taking.
- Identify and/or avoid medication errors and drug interactions.
- Assist the patient to take medications correctly.

How to perform a brown bag medication review:

1. Get patients to bring in their medicines. Conducting brown bag reviews has been VERY eye-opening for many practices, and most feel it is a worthwhile thing to do. The challenge is getting the patient to bring in their medications. It helps to have a full-scale campaign whereby everyone in the practice is stressing its importance and many different tactics are employed. Here are a few suggestions:
 - What to bring: Review with patients what to bring.
 - All prescription medicines (including pills and creams).
 - All over-the-counter medicine they take regularly.
 - All vitamins and supplements.
 - All herbal medicines.
2. Set out the medications.
 - The nurse should place all of the patient’s medications on the counter in the exam room to remind the clinician to perform a medication review.
3. Offer praise to the patient for bringing medications.
 - Thank the patient for bringing his or her medications and stress the importance of bringing them to every visit.
4. Review the medications.
 - Introduce the review process: Ask the patient if they have any questions about their medications, and acknowledge the purpose of reviewing medications.

- Some helpful questions to ask:

“Are you taking any new medications since your last visit?”

“Have you stopped taking any medications since your last visit?”

“Please show me what you take for your <disease name> ?”

“How many of these pills do you take each day?”

“When do you take this pill?”

“What do you take this medication for?”

5. Clarify medication instructions.

6. Update the medications in the patient’s chart.

- Clearly document medication inconsistencies and what the patient is directed to take.
- Note in the chart when full medication reviews are done and when partial or updated ones are done to help track the process for the practice.

7. Provide patient with updated list of medications.

- Refer to Tool 17: Patient Wellness Handout.

For pharmacists, utilize Medication Therapy Management clinic code (D2) and appropriate CPT codes:

99605 Medication therapy management service(s) provided by a pharmacist, individual, face-to-face with patient, initial 15 minutes, with assessment, and intervention if provided; initial 15 minutes, new patient

99606 Initial 15 minutes, established patient

99607 Each additional 15 minutes (list separately in addition to code for primary service)