

# Mosby's Nursing Video Skills

## Procedure Guidelines for Administering Ear Medications

1. Verify the health care provider's orders.
2. Gather the necessary equipment and supplies.
3. Perform hand hygiene.
4. Provide for the patient's privacy.
5. Introduce yourself to the patient and family, if present.
6. Identify the patient using two identifiers. Ask the patient about allergies.
7. Take the medication to the patient at the correct time (refer to agency policy). Give time-critical medications (e.g., stat and "now" doses) at the exact time ordered. As you proceed, apply the Six Rights of medication administration.
8. Discuss the purpose of each medication, its action, and possible adverse effects. Allow the patient to ask questions about the drugs. Patients who wish to self-instill medications may be allowed to do so under a nurse's supervision (check agency policy).
9. Instill ear medication:
  - A. Apply clean gloves if drainage is present.
  - B. Position the patient on his or her side (if not contraindicated) with the ear to be treated facing up. Alternately the patient may sit in a chair or at the bedside. Tilt the patient's head toward the unaffected side, and stabilize it with the patient's own hand.
  - C. For an adult or child older than 3 years of age, straighten the ear canal by pulling the pinna up and back to the 10 o'clock position. For a child younger than 3 years of age, pull the pinna down and back to the 6 o'clock or 9 o'clock position.
  - D. If cerumen or drainage occludes the outermost portion of the ear canal, wipe it out gently with a cotton-tipped applicator. Take care not to force cerumen into the canal.
  - E. Instill the prescribed drops by holding the dropper 1 cm (½ inch) above the ear canal.
  - F. Ask the patient to remain in a side-lying position, on the unaffected side, for a few minutes. Gently massage or put pressure on the tragus of the ear with your finger.

- G. If ordered, gently insert a portion of a cotton ball into the outermost part of the ear canal. Do not press cotton into the canal. Remove the cotton after 15 minutes.
10. Dispose of your used supplies in the appropriate trash receptacle, remove and dispose of your gloves (if used), and perform hand hygiene.
  11. After the drops have been absorbed, help the patient into a comfortable position and place toiletries and personal items within reach.
  12. Place the call light within easy reach, and make sure the patient knows how to use it to summon assistance.
  13. To ensure the patient's safety, raise the appropriate number of side rails and lower the bed to the lowest position.
  14. Leave the patient's room tidy.
  15. Document and report the patient's response and expected or unexpected outcomes.