



# MEDICATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

## Are They Required in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)?

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### Background

Exposure to medications via breastmilk is a key concern for premature neonates receiving either breast milk or expressed milk. Current NICU documentation does not capture an ongoing maternal medication history that allows for incorporation of lactation safety advice. Additionally, there is no official location to document clinical interventions made during the hospital stay and medication planning when the neonate is being discharged or transitioning care.

### Aims

Determine the need for, and required contents of, a document in the NICU for the recording of maternal medication history, clinical interventions and discharge medication planning.

### Method

- Medication history was collected from 60 lactating women in the NICU.
- Safety of use in lactation was determined for the identified medications.
- Common NICU discharge medications were evaluated.
- Pharmacist interventions made in the NICU were collated.

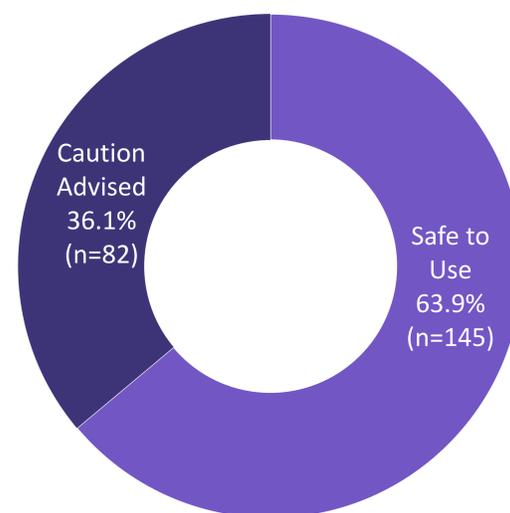


Figure 1. Safety classification of medications taken by women providing milk to neonates in the NICU.

### Results and Discussion

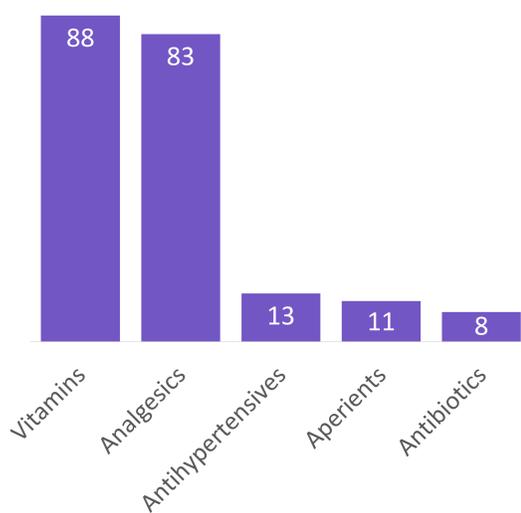


Figure 2. Top 5 most common medication classes taken by women in the NICU (total n=227)

As shown in Figure 1, over one-third (n=82) of the medications recorded required a degree of caution and/or monitoring of the infant. The NICU cares for vulnerable, unwell and/or preterm neonates, therefore it is vital that the care providers are aware of any additional external factors that may impact their care.

From January to June 2021, 219 medications were dispensed for infants at discharge. Parent/Guardian education regarding administration and monitoring was recommended for all medications.

Over the same 6-month period, 306 interventions were addressed by the NICU pharmacist, recorded in an internal pharmacy database.

### Tramadol as an Example

Tramadol was the most commonly prescribed opioid for postnatal women in this study. It is **considered safe** for a woman to provide milk to a neonate while she is taking tramadol. However, it is recommended that the neonate is monitored for **sedation, poor feeding, or changes to their sleeping pattern.**



### Conclusion

This study showed the value for dedicated real estate on NICU medical forms for adequate documentation of maternal and neonatal medications, and clinical interventions. Optimising neonatal documentation in-line with National Standards for adult documentation promotes the rationale to develop a neonatal medication management plan that includes fields to record maternal medication history, medication planning on discharge and clinical interventions.

### References

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