

To Kit or Not to Kit: That Is the Question

Admission kits are one of the most commonly used patient items in a hospital. But they also are a common source of wasted money.

Typically, the admission kit consists of a plastic pitcher and cup, toothbrush, toothpaste, a 2-ounce container of lotion, an emesis basin, and a bar of soap. All of these items are housed within a plastic basin, and one kit is provided to each patient on admittance.

Individually, all of these items would cost the hospital \$2.84. When they are packaged in a kit, the cost is only \$2.63—or a \$0.21 savings per kit. However, the savings can only be realized if a patient actually needs and uses all the items in the kit during his or her stay.

Wanted on Intubated Patients

Consider the following scenario: A patient is admitted in respiratory failure and is quickly intubated and transferred to the intensive care

unit (ICU). The patient receives that wonderful admission kit, but has absolutely no need for the pitcher and cup, the toothbrush, or the toothpaste. However, because these items are part of a kit, they are distributed, and during a 10-day stay, four kits are opened for the patient to provide enough of the remaining supplies.

The actual cost of the necessary kit components used by the patient adds up to \$1.36 for a 10-day stay. But the hospital will pay \$10.52 for four kits in those 10 days, which adds up to a loss of \$9.16. If a hospital sees 5,000 patients a year that require intubation, the loss would come to \$45,800 a year. Scenarios such as this one question the cost effectiveness of using admission kits as a way to distribute patient supplies.

When Not to Kit

A better system may be to keep reasonable par levels of kit components on each unit and have those components delivered to the patients as needed. Of course, this method takes additional staff time and resources, which also could be cost prohibitive. Whatever method a hospital ultimately uses, the decision must be measured against the actual cost of using the kits.

Here's a good rule of thumb: If you are considering putting supplies together into a kit for convenience purposes, be certain that all components will be used every time the kit is opened and that the amount of each component is appropriate for the time period that the kit will be in use.

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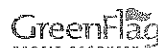
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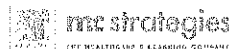
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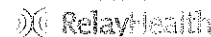


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