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Your Guide to Labelling in Healthcare





Navigating a world of chaos

With hospitals and clinics at high capacity with stretched resources, healthcare facilities are increasingly under pressure to keep up with rapidly changing industry standards.

In turn, you're facing a number of growing challenges:

- **Evolving** governance and regulatory requirements
- **Higher standards** of care and quality of life
- **Sickness prevention**
- **Patient safety**
- **Asset and equipment** maintenance

In this eBook, we'll provide you with an overview on how labelling can support different areas of your healthcare facility and help you meet these daily challenges consistently.



Staying compliant with regulations

Regulations are often a moving target. The next five years will be an especially transformative period in healthcare, as Australia plans to invest \$133.6 billion in reform packages. That's why every advantage matters when it comes to meeting requirements.

Across the board, healthcare facilities require solutions that are in sync with compliance, from food products to medication to medical devices, labels serve an integral purpose.

Labelling solutions can help you ensure safety and play a part in supporting your most critical tasks, processes and workflows, such as administering medication and other treatments.

Choosing the right solutions shouldn't be an afterthought - factors such as fade-resistance, adhesiveness and water resistance should be taken into account so you can rely on durable labelling solutions that won't fail when they're needed most.

Source:
<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/2020-25-national-health-reform-agreement-nhra>





Safe handling practices

A study by the [NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association in 2017](#) stated that poor labelling practices was one of the contributing factors to medication error. It's difficult to eliminate the factor of human error in these practices, however, there are some practical applications of labelling solutions to minimise error.

Here are some key recommendations you could explore:



Create and manage a database of patients and their medication



Ensure the data is clean and updated



Connect labelling software with Barcode and QR code capability to the database



Ensure labels have protective layers to prevent abrasion and fading



Print labels with the information directly from the database



Battery-operated labelling for bed-side application

Such medications, procedures and samples also depend on labels to be affixed quickly and accurately. With labels that provide such critical information, it's important that such practices like data accuracy and labelling durability is not an adhoc consideration, but built-in to your processes to adhere to safe handling practices.

Patient Food safety

To guarantee food freshness and, by extension, safety, labels are effective assets. From beginning to end, food safety hinges upon accurate labelling:



Preperation

At this point, labels help food workers ensure all items are maintained for optimal freshness. More importantly, they help workers identify items correctly and dispose of those that have expired.



Identification

After meals have been prepared, they need to be accurately labelled – not only so that patients understand what they’re eating, but so that your staff can correctly identify which meal belongs to whom.



Delivery

Labels help deliver the correct meals to the correct patients. Because dietary restrictions and allergies differ between people, it’s vital that all meals are delivered without mistakes. Without the correct use of labels, food could be prepared incorrectly or delivered to the wrong person, which could trigger a dangerous or adverse reaction.

Labels, in turn, help you guarantee the quality of your meals and provide a satisfactory experience to your patients. Most importantly, they ensure food is prepared and delivered safely.



Improving health and hygiene of life through organisation

Labelling personal items helps you protect your staff and patients from viruses, infections or other illnesses. By ensuring that all items are accounted for and not shared among patients, the risk of transmitting bacteria and infection can be minimised. Likewise, labels help your staff organise important medications, inhalers and other health-related items and make sure materials are available and accessible when needed by those they belong to.



Reducing risk with asset maintenance

Healthcare facilities rely on vital medical equipment to be up and running at a moment's notice. These may include trolleys, wheelchairs, insulin pumps, furniture, scooters and many other equipment types. This means that patient-facing assets need to be properly maintained to appropriate safety standards.

By labelling assets with QR codes or barcodes that link to an asset register, you can monitor equipment and routinely schedule maintenance to avoid damage or asset failure. Moreover, it helps maintenance personnel proactively identify assets that are compromised and pose a risk to staff and patients alike. Not only does this decrease downtime that would have otherwise inconvenienced patients and their families, it also ensures all governance regulations are met.

Above all, labels ensure that the most vital equipment – those that are used in a health emergency – are always available. Crash carts and medication carts alike are necessities in any healthcare facility and need to be actively maintained to guarantee that they're actionable in case of emergency.



Improving accountability and visitor management

Whether it be friends or family, many patients receive visitors on a regular basis.

Tracking visitors that come and go in the facility is an essential procedure. There are several ways a labelling system can streamline your visitor management:



Labels can help you identify visitors by name and organisation and guarantee patient and staff safety



Access control of authorised and unauthorised visitors



Time and date-stamped labels prevent visitors from re-entering the premises without authorisation



Labels with QR codes can help providers track and locate a visitor or employee at any given time, ensuring that only authorised areas of the facility are being accessed

All in all, labels protect the safety of patients while improving workflows for security personnel and giving staff members peace of mind. With greater accountability, healthcare facilities can enjoy enhanced access control and optimise their visitor management process.





The importance of a durable labelling solution

Durability is an important consideration when deploying a labelling system in any healthcare facility. The benchmark for durability in labelling is a label that can withstand day to day wear and tear from abrasion, heat, temperature and water so that it can fulfill its intended purposes of clear identification of items or connecting physical assets to digital information via barcodes or QR codes.

Replacing labels on a regular basis isn't only costly and burdensome to the facility, it also increases the risk that those vital functions will be interrupted. Durable labels can help in a number of significant ways:

- Compliance:** Long-lasting labels ensure sensitive information is kept private and out of unauthorised hands. Better still, they streamline document retrieval and reduce the risk of noncompliance
- Food safety:** Labels applied to food items stored in freezers need to resist smudging when moisture accumulates. Otherwise, food personnel can't guarantee the quality and safety of the preparation and delivery process
- Hygienic:** Labels need to handle being washed with disinfectant or put through a steriliser to satisfy healthcare hygiene requirements whilst remaining intact and attached



- Safe handling:** Fade-resistant labels ensure that specimens and medications aren't mishandled or lost. With added durability, labels can withstand abrasion, water and chemicals
- Asset maintenance:** Labels need to withstand the test of time, especially when affixed to critical equipment, so that maintenance logs can be easily accessed from QR codes or barcodes on the label

Better still, fade-resistant labels are designed to be far more adhesive - they're proven to be the more reliable and a safe labelling solution. From maintenance to safety to visitor management, fade-resistant labels are a must-have asset.

A long-lasting approach to healthcare

You're navigating a dynamic world of obstacles. Whether it be an aging infrastructure of equipment, increasingly strict governance or the safety of your patients, the industry is in need of labelling solutions.

You can leverage a comprehensive labelling solution that provides you with a myriad of benefits:

- **Proactive** asset maintenance and equipment monitoring
- **Support** compliance measures
- **Improve** safety in medication handling
- **Increased** accountability and visitor access control

But not just any old label will suffice – Brother's long-lasting TZe label tapes are designed to withstand all the challenges of a healthcare facility. With seven layers of material, these fade-resistant labels are protected against temperature, water, chemicals and abrasion, combined with strong adhesive properties.

Reach out to our team to learn more about how Brother's fade-resistant labels can improve your healthcare facility.



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