IMPORTANT
As of Sept. 4, 2018, the following nursing colleges amalgamated to become the British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals (BCCNP):

- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of British Columbia (CLPNBC)
- College of Registered Nurses of British Columbia (CRNBC)
- College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of British Columbia (CRPNBC)

Although the information in the document you are about to access reflects our most current information about this topic, you’ll notice the content refers to the previous nursing college that published this document prior to Sept. 4, 2018.

We appreciate your patience while we work towards updating all of our documents to reflect our new name and brand.
Dispensing Medications Decision Tree

This tool is designed to be used in conjunction with the CLPNBC, CRNBC or CRPNBC Dispensing Medications practice standard and your agency policy.

Authority to dispense medication*

- Client-specific order or activity within autonomous scope of practice?
- Client-specific order includes drug, dosage, route, frequency, number of doses, prescriber signature/authorization?
- Client-specific order/activity is evidence-based and considers client's characteristics/wishes?

Do Not Dispense
Take appropriate action to address issue, protect client/interest and ensure continued care

- Follow up with prescriber
- Consult with colleague
- Obtain more information from client/delegate
- Consult agency policy and directives

Medication has been dispensed by a pharmacist

Take steps to ensure pharmaceutical and therapeutic suitability

Client medication profile, relevant health information is available
- Best possible medication history, access to PharmaNet?
- Health status/diagnosis, age, weight, lab results and other relevant data?

Current evidence-based resources are available
- Online clinical database, current drug reference manual, decision support tool (DST)?

Medication is suitable for client
- Any allergies, contraindications, potential drug interactions, therapeutic duplications, other potential concerns?
- Able to take medications as ordered?

Take steps to ensure proper use and client’s understanding

Medication is appropriately packaged and labeled
- Client name, date, medication name, dosage, route, quantity, directions for use, nurse initials?
- Prescriber name, dispensing facility address and phone number?
- Packaged appropriately for client needs?

Information provided to client/delegate
- Adapt for client understanding and medication history?
- Includes purpose, benefits, dose and frequency, side effects, contraindications, storage?
- Written information provided as needed?

Dispense medication
Hand medication directly to client/delegate
Document dispensing in appropriate record, including date, medication name, strength, dose, quantity, therapy length, directions to client

*Exception for dispensing of naloxone
Nurses may dispense naloxone to a person who is not their client/client’s delegate for the purpose of treating a suspected opioid overdose.

Nurses take steps to ensure proper use by teaching these individuals to respond appropriately to persons experiencing a suspected opioid overdose.