PURPOSE
Instructions on how to safely prepare and dispense a limited number of medication doses for patients discharged from the Emergency Department. Recommended practice for patients discharged from the Emergency Department is to receive an outpatient prescription for medication (note: triplicate prescription for narcotics).

POLICY STATEMENTS
Nurses dispense medications when it is in the best interest of the patient.
Nurses dispense medications only to patients under their care.
Medications dispensed must be properly labeled and packaged.
Nurses provide patient/family education based on an assessment of the patient’s/family’s abilities and level of understanding regarding the medication.
Dispensing information must be documented on the patient record each time a medication is dispensed.

SITE APPLICABILITY
Applicable in the Emergency Department of BCCH.

PRACTICE LEVEL/COMPETENCIES
Registered nurses in the Emergency Department of BCCH may prepare and dispense medications to patients who are being discharged following steps as outlined in this procedure and as per CRNBC Practice Standard: Dispensing Medications.

DEFINITIONS
Dispense: The preparation and transfer of a medication to a client, taking steps to ensure its pharmaceutical and therapeutic suitability and its proper use.

EQUIPMENT
- Ordered medication
- Child-resistant medication container
- Medication labels
- Drug information sheet if available

PROCEDURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Obtain written prescriber’s order indicating that an emergency supply of medication is required to be dispensed to the patient.</td>
<td>Patient/family may be unable or may refuse to have prescription filled in pharmacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Assess pharmaceutical and therapeutic suitability</td>
<td>Ensures suitability for the patient.</td>
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<td>- Review the order for completeness and appropriateness (drug, dosage, route, frequency of administration)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Review the patient’s medication history and health information</td>
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<td>- Consider potential drug interactions, contraindications, allergies, therapeutic duplications, or other problems (eg. adverse effects)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Use current evidence-based resources to support decision-making (eg. Micromedex, UpToDate,</td>
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BCCH Drug Dosing Guidelines)

Consider the patient’s ability to follow the medication regimen

3. **OBTAIN** medication from ward stock and repackage it into a clearly and accurately labeled **child resistant container** (FIGURE 1). The **label** (FIGURE 2) must include:

- Patient’s name
- Drug name and strength
- Dosage
- Directions for administration (route, time due)
- Quantity dispensed
- Date dispensed
- Any other information that is part of standard pharmacy practice (e.g., expiry date, appropriate special instructions such as “shake well”, “refrigerate”)
- Initials of RN distributing medication
- Location from which the medication is dispensed (including name of hospital, department, address and telephone number)

**NOTE:** medications dispensed are provided free-of-charge.

![FIGURE 1](image1)

![FIGURE 2](image2)

3. **ASSESS** patient’s/family’s level of understanding regarding the medication

4. **REVIEW** the following with patient/family and **PROVIDE** any written drug information sheets available:

- Purpose of medication
- Dosage regime and instructions, expected benefits, side effects, storage requirements
- Written medication information on label

**DOCUMENTATION**

**DOCUMENT** in appropriate record. The record will include:

- Patient’s name, address, phone number, birthdate, allergies, hospital unit number and personal health number
- Date dispensed
- Name, strength, dosage of medication
- Quantity dispensed

Ensures safety and accuracy in administration.

Patient/family education re: medication to ensure compliance and appropriate use.
DISPENSING MEDICATION BY NURSES TO PATIENTS DISCHARGED
FROM THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

- Duration of therapy
- Directions to patient/family
- Any other pertinent actions or observations

REFERENCES


