DISPENSING MEDICATIONS TO PATIENTS GRANTED TEMPORARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM HOSPITAL (PASS MEDS)

DOCUMENT TYPE: PROCEDURE

Site Applicability
This procedure is applicable to all clinical areas at BC Children’s Hospital and BC Women’s Hospital and Health Centre, including Sunny Hill Health Centre and Healthy Minds Centre where patients may be granted a leave of absence (day, over-night or weekend pass).

Practice Level/Competencies
The preparation and dispensing of medications to patients granted temporary leave of absence (pass) is a basic skill for RNs, RPNs and LPNs.
Nurses must have the required competencies to prepare and dispense medications according to the BCCNP Dispensing Medications Practice Standard and the steps outlined in this procedure.

Policy Statements
A prescriber’s order is required to authorize a leave of absence.
If a medication dose is scheduled to coincide with departure or return times, the medication is to be administered on site.
For a leave of less than 24 hours, the nurse will dispense the medications as per procedures described in section I, steps 1 to 9.
For a leave between 24 to 96 hours, Pharmacy will provide the medications as per procedures described in section II, steps 10 to 17. The prescriber’s order authorizing the leave of absence must specify the length of time the patient will be absent from the hospital and the order must be received by Pharmacy 24 hours in advance of the planned leave to allow adequate time for processing the request.
The nurse or pharmacist who dispenses prescription opioids to patients granted temporary leave from the hospital will apply a standard warning label to the drug package and provide a patient information handout as per Health Canada regulation for prescription opioids.

Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>RATIONALE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. NURSE DISPENSES MEDICATION FOR A LEAVE LESS THAN 24 HOURS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. DETERMINE that the patient going out on pass requires medication during the authorized leave.</td>
<td>Medication schedules should continue while patient is out on pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DETERMINE which medication the patient will require based on the current prescriber orders.</td>
<td>To ensure correct number of doses of each medication is supplied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. OBTAIN medication from patient’s medication drawer or wardstock (e.g. Omnicell cabinet).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. SEND Medication Order Memorandum (MOM) to Pharmacy for obtaining additional medication doses if required. Specify on the MOM the purpose of the extra doses.</td>
<td>Medication for the next 24 hours is delivered by Pharmacy between 1500h and 1600h. The unit may not have all necessary doses needed during the leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. PLACE medication into child-resistant container(s) as per Figure 1.</td>
<td>Required safe medication practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LABEL medication container(s) with pre-printed label(s) shown in Figure 2. Enter on the label:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Patient’s name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Drug name and strength</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Dosage
- Route
- Time of administration
- Instructions for use and storage requirements
- Quantity dispensed
- Initials of the nurse dispensing the medication
- Location from which the medication is dispensed including name, address and telephone number

Containers and pre-printed labels are available from Pharmacy.

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**Figure 1**

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**Figure 2**

6. **APPLY** a warning sticker to the container of an opioid narcotic medication and, **PROVIDE** a patient information handout “Opioid Medicines – Information for Patients and Families”.

Warning stickers are obtained from Pharmacy.


List of opioids can be accessed at:

To comply with Health Canada requirements for prescription opioids under the Food and Drug Regulations. Details of this regulation can be accessed from the “Health Canada Website”.

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### 7. IDENTIFY patient and REVIEW:
- Administration guidelines with patient/caregiver – purpose of medication, dosage regime and instructions required to achieve the intended therapeutic response, expected benefits, side effects, storage, requirements and written medication information as needed.
- The requirement to return unused medication.

Failure to correctly identify patients prior to procedures may result in errors.

Evaluates and reinforces understanding of previously taught information and ensures accuracy in administration.

### 8. VERIFY that medication was administered as instructed upon patient return to unit.

To complete documentation.

### 9. WASTE any unused medication returned.

### II. PHARMACY DISPENSES MEDICATION FOR A LEAVE OF 24 TO 96 HOURS

#### 10. PRESCRIBER writes order for medication to be administered during the leave:
- Write dates and times the absence begins and ends
- Write “provide all regularly scheduled medication”

**NOTE:**
non-prescription medication (e.g. acetaminophen, PEG, melatonin) will not be automatically supplied unless specifically requested.

- Write which prn medication is required and indicate the number of doses (e.g. “lorazepam 1mg at bedtime prn insomnia – supply 2 doses”)

To ensure correct number of doses of each medication is supplied.

Writing “all regularly scheduled medication” will direct pharmacy to automatically supply regularly scheduled medication for the time period specified.

Indicating number of doses of prn medication will direct pharmacy to provide the correct number of doses.

#### 11. NURSE scans order to Pharmacy.

#### 12. PHARMACY dispenses the medication:
- Provide medication in child-resistant container(s)
- Label container(s) with
  - Date
  - Patient’s name
  - Drug name
  - Prescriber’s name
  - Full directions for use
  - Auxiliary label(s) if required

To comply with the College of Pharmacists of BC dispensing requirements for outpatient prescriptions.

To comply with Health Canada requirements for
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>opioid narcotic medication and provide a patient information handout “Opioid Medicines – Information for Patients and Families” in a ziplock bag along with the medication container.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prescription opioids under the Food and Drug Regulations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide labelled zip-lock bags for <strong>topical</strong> and multidose <strong>inhaled</strong> medication for the nurse to place the patient’s medication in the bag and give it to the patient as they leave. On their return, the patient must return the medication to the unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. PHARMACY</td>
<td>sends medication to the unit.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>NOTE:</strong> Narcotic and controlled drugs must be picked up and signed for by a nurse at the inpatient pharmacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. NURSE</td>
<td>verifies that the correct drug/dose/schedule and quantity of medication has been provided by Pharmacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensures correct drugs are provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. NURSE</td>
<td>identifies the patient and reviews:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Administration guidelines with patient/caregiver – purpose of medication, dosage regime and instructions required to achieve the intended therapeutic response, expected benefits, side effects, storage, requirements and written medication information as needed.</td>
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<td>- The requirement to return unused medication.</td>
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<td>Failure to correctly identify patients prior to procedures may result in errors.</td>
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<td>Evaluates and reinforces understanding of previously taught information and ensures accuracy in administration.</td>
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<td>16. NURSE</td>
<td>verifies that the medication was administered as instructed upon patient return to the unit.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To complete documentation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. NURSE</td>
<td>wastes any unused medication returned.</td>
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**Documentation**

**DOCUMENT** on Authorization for Patient’s Leave of Absence for Therapeutic Purposes form:
- date and time of departure
- directions given to patient/caregiver
- any other pertinent actions or observations

**DOCUMENT** on each scheduled dosing times on the MAR that patient is Out on Pass (OOP) while absent.

**DOCUMENT** in nurses’ notes date and time of departure, date and time of return, whether medication was taken as instructed and if/when prn medication was taken.

**DOCUMENT** and **CO-SIGN** any narcotic or controlled drug (e.g. stimulants) wastage on patient’s MAR.
Patient & Family/Caregiver Engagement/Education

Provide education to the patient and/or family accompanying the patient on pass. Include:

- the purpose of the medication
- how to administer the medication
- dosing and any instructions as per the label
- written information about the medication

References


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.

Developed By

Pharmacy – Pharmacy Distribution Coordinator

Version History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DOCUMENT NUMBER and TITLE</th>
<th>ACTION TAKEN</th>
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<td>12-Nov-2019</td>
<td>C-0506-12-60415 PTN.02.008 Dispensing Medications to Patients Granted Temporary Leave of Absence From Hospital (Pass Meds)</td>
<td>Approved at: Pharmacy, Therapeutics &amp; Nutrition Committee</td>
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