

Registered Nurses Association
of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut
Practice and Prescriptive Guidelines for Nurse Practitioners
Nunavut



Introduction

A Nurse practitioner (NP) is a registered nurse with additional educational preparation and experience. Only nurses who are licensed with the Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (RNANT/NU) to practice as an NP can use the designation “Nurse Practitioner” in the NT and NU. NPs practice in a variety of settings including community, acute care, and long-term care. In accordance with the Nursing Profession Act S.N.W.T. 2003, c.15 (as amended) and the Nursing Profession Act, S.Nu 2003, c.17, a Nurse Practitioner in the NT and NU has the legislated authority to:

- a. Make a diagnosis identifying a disease, disorder or condition;
- b. Communicate a diagnosis to a patient;
- c. Order and interpret screening and diagnostic tests authorized in guidelines approved by the Minister;
- d. Select, recommend, supply, prescribe and monitor the effectiveness of drugs authorized in guidelines approved by the Minister; and
- e. Perform other procedures that are authorized in guidelines approved by the Minister.

This document identifies the diagnostic tests, procedures, drugs, and other treatments that nurse practitioners in NU are authorized to perform and/or order. These Guidelines, approved by the Minister of Health, Government of Nunavut, provide the necessary authority for nurse practitioners, as defined in section 1 (Definitions) of the Nursing Profession Acts, to prescribe those drugs included in the Prescription Drug List and/or Schedule I of the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) and controlled substances as per the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (Canada) as amended from time to time.

This is not a stand-alone document and should be used as a companion with other documents including but not limited to the Nursing Profession Acts, Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, and Canadian Nurse Practitioner Core Competency Framework.



Approved by:

Minister of Health

Nunavut



Date

Note: Signature of the Minister validates these guidelines in the jurisdiction for which that Minister is responsible.

Diagnostic and Imaging Tests

A Nurse Practitioner is authorized to order the following diagnostic imaging tests:

- X-rays
- Ultrasounds
- Scans:
 - Computerized tomography
 - Bone density
 - Mammography
 - Other scans required for a patient's health condition or injury

Laboratory and Other Non-Laboratory Tests

A Nurse Practitioner is authorized to order and interpret the laboratory and other non-laboratory tests including, but not limited to:

Laboratory Tests

- Microbiology
- Immunology
- Cytology/pathology
- Hematology
- Biochemistry
- Virology
- Genetic testing

Other

- Additional tests required by the patient population including, but not limited to:
 - Pulmonary function tests
 - Holter monitoring
 - ECG
 - Sleep apnea testing

Procedures

As part of their practice, nurse practitioners have the authority to perform both non-invasive and invasive procedures for which competence has been developed and maintained. A nurse practitioner performs procedures in the following areas:

- Suturing
- Irrigation
- Incision and drainage
- Excisions
- Insertions
- Joint reductions (shoulder, digits)
- Limb immobilization including casting
- Other additional procedures required by the patient population (e.g. joint injections)

Prescriptive Authority

Based on their patient population and as part of their practice, nurse practitioners have the authority to prescribe drugs listed in the Prescription Drug List and /or drugs listed in Schedule I of the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) National Drug Schedules (www.napra.ca/pages/Schedules/Search.aspx) and controlled substances as per the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA), Canada and applicable regulations. The [Prescription Drug List](#) is a list of medicinal ingredients that when found in a drug, require a prescription. It does not include medicinal ingredients that when found in a drug, require a prescription if those ingredients are listed in *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* Schedules.

Non-prescription drugs can be obtained without a prescription; however, NPs can write a prescription for such drugs, if required (NAPRA Schedule II and III). This also includes various devices (e.g. colostomy equipment).

Changes to the *Food and Drugs Act* (section 29.1) will give the Federal Minister of Health the power to establish a list that sets out prescription drugs.

A Nurse Practitioner is authorized to prescribe vaccines as outlined in the Canadian Immunization Guide as revised from time to time. A Nurse Practitioner is also authorized to prescribe treatments such as massage therapy, acupuncture, etc.

When prescribing drugs, NPs assess the patient's need; consider the risks and benefits of drug therapy for each patient; have an awareness of the evidence on outcomes and cost effectiveness; provide patients with relevant information and counseling on drug therapies including cost effective alternative choices; and monitor and document a patient's response to drug therapy. Nurse practitioners collaborate and consult with a physician or pharmacist as appropriate.

The *New Classes of Practitioners Regulations* (under the CDSA) has been revised to identify the NP as a “practitioner” who is eligible to prescribe controlled substances with limited exceptions.

References

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