

TITLE: ADMINISTERING OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Red Deer College (RDC) Administering Over the Counter Medications Policy provides guidelines, protocol, and procedures to ensure the consistent and appropriate administration of Over the Counter (OTC) Medications to students and employees by Registered Nurses in the Health, Safety and Wellness Centre.

PURPOSE:

This policy provides uniform guidelines for the safe, competent, and ethical administration of OTC Medications to students and employees at RDC.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to Registered Nurses working in RDC's Health, Safety and Wellness Centre. It also applies to all students (over the age of 18) and employees who request OTC Medications from the Registered Nurses. OTC Medications are not administered to students under the age of 18 without parental consent or to visitors.

PRINCIPLES:

1. Policies at RDC:
 - 1.1. Treat all persons fairly and respectfully.
 - 1.2. Are non-discriminatory and non-intrusive.
 - 1.3. Incorporate open, honest and timely communication.
 - 1.4. Are made in a timely manner.
 - 1.5. Provide appropriate confidentiality and privacy.
 - 1.6. Provide appropriate access to the College and education.
 - 1.7. Ensure that all persons have access to informed support regarding policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities.
 - 1.8. Operate with clear written expectations for conduct and handling of complaints.
 - 1.9. Meet all regulatory standards.
 - 1.10. Maintain and clearly state a high standard of instruction and administration in all areas of educational programs and services.
 - 1.11. Are communicated in alternate forms to those who require such accommodation.
2. The following principles apply specifically to this policy:
 - 2.1. Registered Nurses are accountable to the Canadian Registered Nurses Association (CARNA), which determines the scope of practice and laws applicable to Registered Nurses.
 - 2.2. As stated in the CARNA Medication Guidelines (March 2015), "Nurses can recommend and assist clients in the selection of OTC Medication or implement a

protocol that contains an OTC Medication when supported by their employer's policy."

- 2.3. There is a shared responsibility and accountability between staff and students to respect the RDC Administering Over the Counter Medication Policy due to the potential health and litigation risks of incorrect administration.

DEFINITIONS:

Prescribed Medication: a pharmaceutical drug that legally requires a medical prescription to be dispensed.

Over the Counter (OTC) Medication: can be obtained without a prescription. The medication/drug scheduling categories are outlined by the *Alberta Pharmacy and Drug Act* (2000) and are aligned with the national drug schedule.

GUIDELINES:

1. Safe and effective medication management includes the knowledge of medication safety, human factors that may impact medication safety, limitations of medication systems, required procedures for documentation, and overall best practices.
2. Registered Nurses are responsible for administering medications within their scope of practice.
3. Registered Nurses are knowledgeable about the effects, side effects, and interactions of medications and take action as necessary.
4. Registered Nurses promote safe care, and contribute to a culture of safety within their practice environment, when involved in medication practices.
5. Registered Nurses maintain accurate records regarding the administration of OTC Medications.
6. OTC Medications provided through the Health, Safety and Wellness Centre are administered only by a Registered Nurse.

PROCEDURE:

The Registered Nurse:

1. Takes steps to ensure a OTC Medication's pharmaceutical and therapeutic suitability for the student or employee, as well as its proper use, when dispensing without a pharmacist's involvement, i.e. when a pharmacist has not reviewed the medication's suitability (or it's unclear if this was done).
2. Refers to the Medical Directives for OTC Medications to review drug specifics related to Indications, Dosage, and Contraindications.
3. Completes an assessment prior to administering medication and does not dispense if the student or employee's condition will be compromised.
 - 3.1. An assessment includes the following questions:
 - 3.1.1. What medication is the student or employee requesting?
 - 3.1.2. Is the medication suitable or recommended?
 - 3.1.3. Is the medication appropriate for the symptoms?

- 3.1.4. Is the expiry date current?
- 3.1.5. Is the medication appropriate given the employee's job responsibilities to ensure a safe work environment?
- 3.1.6. Is the medication appropriate for the student or employee based on their health status or condition?
- 3.1.7. Does the student or employee have any allergies and sensitivities?
- 4. Fully informs the student or employee about anticipated side effects, contraindications, and follow-up (if any) before administering the medication.
- 5. Does not administer the requested medication if there is any doubt during the assessment.
- 6. Refers the student or employee to other care providers (physician or pharmacist) when their specific health information or medication history is not known.
- 7. Documents the action taken and the advice given, following administration of the appropriate medication.

The Manager, Health, Safety and Wellness:

- 1. Continuously evaluates RDC policy and procedures related to medication administration.
- 2. Determines who can safely administer medication.
- 3. Annually monitors performance through observation of procedures, review of documentation, handling of medications, etc.
- 4. Provides medication information resources and updates these resources as needed.
- 5. Reviews and takes appropriate action regarding any reported medication error.
- 6. Takes corrective action when the Registered Nurse to whom medication administration is delegated does not meet standard performance.
- 7. Shares policies, procedures, and forms with local authorized pharmacists and the College physician.
- 8. Administers medications in accordance with CARNA's Dispensing Medication Practice Standard, Standards for Acting Without an Order and/or Standards for Acting With an Order.
- 9. Consults with the College physician if there is any doubt during an assessment.

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: Vice President, Corporate

RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY: Service Council

CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW: Service Council, Manager, Health, Safety and Wellness Centre

POLICY REVIEW DATE: December 2022

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 1, 2017

REVISION HISTORY: New policy

RELATED POLICIES:

- [Health and Safety](#)

CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:

All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors policies.