

Standards of Practice



DRUGS: GENERAL

The following Standard of Practice applies to the use of both prescription and non-prescription drugs in the practice of dental hygiene.

All dental hygienists are authorized to administer, recommend, sell, or provide drugs for clients. Dental hygienists who apply for and receive authorization from the College may prescribe Schedule 1 drugs as an **advanced restricted activity**, as set out in the [Restricted Activities Standard of Practice](#). The dental hygienist who receives this authorization must also adhere to the Drugs: Prescribing Standard of Practice when prescribing a Schedule 1 drug.

STANDARD STATEMENT

The dental hygienist uses an evidence-informed approach to administer, recommend, prescribe (if authorized), **sell**, and provide drugs safely and appropriately.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The dental hygienist must...

1. Utilize prescription and non-prescription drugs and natural health products appropriately within their scope of practice, practice setting, competencies, and in compliance with legislation.

The dental hygienist who administers, recommends, prescribes, sells, or provides a prescription or non-prescription drug must...

2. Adhere to current applicable provincial and federal legislation, standards, ethical principles, guidelines, and policies.
3. Complete a relevant client assessment, including consideration of the client's health history and current **drug history**, and formulate a **care plan**.
4. Only treat oral health conditions which the dental hygienist can identify and manage.
5. Identify and use **evidence-informed** best practice guidelines and resources regarding drug therapies used in dental hygiene practice. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a) knowledge of the drug;
 - b) possible drug interactions;
 - c) contraindications; and
 - d) risks and benefits of the expected treatment outcomes.
6. Apply critical thinking to ensure that the drug therapy aligns with the client's oral health goals.
7. Exercise the right to refuse to perform or provide services requested by the client when the risks associated with that service outweigh the benefits for the client.
8. Support the client's informed choices and obtain **informed consent** by discussing:
 - a) the rationale for the selection of a particular drug;
 - b) implications of using drug therapy;
 - c) costs; if applicable
 - d) expected outcomes; and
 - e) possible risks.

9. Maintain complete and accurate records of drugs administered, recommended, prescribed, sold, or provided. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Accessing, utilizing, and contributing to the client's record and complete drug profile;
 - b) Documenting the administration of drugs in accordance with applicable legislation, standards, and guidelines;
 - c) Documenting drugs recommended prescribed, sold, or provided;
 - d) Ensuring that client record and drug information is recorded and filed systematically, accurately and is easily retrievable.
10. Acquire, store, and dispose of drugs in a manner that:
 - a) adheres to provincial, and federal legislation and guidelines;
 - b) protects the integrity, quality, and safety of drugs;
 - c) minimizes the possibility of errors; and
 - d) ensures that drugs are secured against theft, loss, or diversion.
11. Participate in a quality assurance program that provides for preventing, reporting, investigating, and evaluating **drug errors**. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Taking appropriate action if:
 - i. a drug error or **adverse drug event** is discovered; or
 - ii. there is a reasonable suspicion that a drug error has occurred or will occur;
 - b) Documenting and reporting all **drug incidents**, drug errors, or adverse drug events within 24 hours of discovery;
 - c) Contributing to monitoring and improving processes to minimize risk;
 - d) Participating in the [Canada Vigilance Program](#), Health Canada's post-market surveillance program for reported adverse drug reactions;
 - e) Reporting any **critical adverse drug events** to the College within 24 hours.

The dental hygienist who administers a prescription or non-prescription drug must...

12. Prepare and administer the drug in a manner that ensures accuracy and safety. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a) using knowledge of drug incidents and errors and taking steps to prevent them;
 - b) identifying the need for, and participating in, activities that create safe drug systems and practices;
 - c) safeguarding drugs and not leaving drugs unattended.
13. Ensure the client record contains:
 - a) The name of the client to whom the drug administered;
 - b) The date and time the drug was administered;
 - c) The route of administration;
 - d) The name, strength, dose and dosage form of the drug;
 - e) Identification of the dental hygienist who administered the drug.

The dental hygienist who recommends a non-prescription drug for a client must...

14. Consider appropriate information about the client's condition to make a professional judgment on whether to:
 - a) Recommend a non-prescription drug;
 - b) Refer to an appropriate health professional; or
 - c) Recommend another treatment or no treatment.

15. Provide the client with sufficient information to enable the client to receive the intended benefit of the drug therapy. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Rationale for the selection of a particular drug;
 - b) Implications of using drug therapy;
 - c) Risks and benefits of drug therapy;
 - d) Possible side effects and when to report; and
 - e) When applicable, administration instructions, and possible drug or food interactions.
16. Record the recommendation of non-prescription drugs in the client's record, including:
 - a) The name of the client for whom the drug recommended;
 - b) The date the drug was recommended;
 - c) Details of the name, strength, dose, and dosage form of the drug, if provided; and
 - d) Identification of the dental hygienists who recommended the drug.

The dental hygienist who provides or sells a drug must...

17. Only provide or sell compounded drugs when it is not reasonably possible for the client to obtain the drug from a pharmacy.
18. Store all drugs for provision or sale in a location and manner that does not allow clients to self-select the drugs.
19. Provide the client with sufficient information to enable the client to receive the intended benefit of the drug therapy. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Rationale for the selection of a particular drug;
 - b) Implications of using drug therapy;
 - c) Risks and benefits of drug therapy;
 - d) Possible side effects and when to report; and
 - e) When applicable, administration instructions, and possible drug or food interactions.
20. Hand the drug directly to the client. If the drug is being released to a client's agent, the dental hygienist must:
 - a) Confirm that the person is authorized to act as an agent for the client;
 - b) Provide the agent with the adequate information described above, if the dental hygienist is satisfied that it is in the client's best interest to do so;
 - c) Where possible, communicate verbally with the client.
21. Ensure drugs provided or sold are in appropriate containers by:
 - a) Providing or selling drugs in the manufacturer's original package or container unless it is not reasonably possible to do so; and
 - b) Using a child-resistant package unless it is not appropriate for the client, suitable for the drug or readily available.
22. If the drug is removed from the manufacturer's package, ensure that:
 - a) The drug is in an appropriate package, having regard for the nature of the drug, including sensitivity to light and temperature.
 - b) For non-prescription drugs, the package or container has a label that is clear, legible and includes the following:
 - i. A description of the drug in English including the generic name, strength and manufacturer of the drug, or the brand name and manufacturer for a combination drug product;
 - ii. The quantity of drug in the package;
 - iii. A lot number for the drug;
 - iv. The expiry date for the drug;
 - v. Directions for use.

- c) For Schedule 1 drugs, the package or container has a label that is clear, legible, and includes the following:
- i. The name of the client for whom the drug is provided;
 - ii. The name, address and telephone number of the dental hygienist who provided the drug;
 - iii. The name of the prescriber of the drug;
 - iv. A description of the drug in English including the generic name, strength, and manufacturer of the drug, or the brand name and manufacturer for a combination drug product;
 - v. Instructions for the use of the drug;
 - vi. The date the drug was provided;
 - vii. The quantity of the drug provided.
23. Ensure the accuracy of the drug being provided.
24. Record the sale or provision of the drug in the client record. This includes:
- i. The name of the client for whom the drug was provided;
 - ii. The date the drug was provided;
 - iii. The name, strength, and dosage form of the drug;
 - iv. The drug identification number (DIN) of the drug;
 - v. The quantity of the drug provided;
 - vi. Identification of the dental hygienists who provided the drug.

CLIENT EXPECTATION

The **client** can expect the dental hygienist to incorporate drugs into the client's care safely, competently, and appropriately.

GLOSSARY

ADVERSE DRUG EVENT

An unexpected and undesired incident related to drug therapy that results an adverse outcome for a client, including injury or complication.

CARE PLAN

"Statement of goals, evidence-based interventions, and appointment schedule supporting the diagnosis" (Bowen & Pieren, 2020, p. 363).

COMPOUND

To mix together 2 or more ingredients of which at least one is a drug for the purposes of dispensing a drug or drugs, but does not include reconstituting a drug or drugs with only water ([Government Organization Act](#)).

CRITICAL ADVERSE DRUG EVENT

An unexpected and undesired incident related to drug therapy that results in client injury or death, or an adverse outcome for a client, including injury or complication, that requires transfer to a hospital, with or without admission.

CLIENT'S AGENT

A family member, caregiver or another individual who has a close personal relationship with the client.

DRUG

Unless otherwise specified, includes both:

- prescription drugs (refers to drugs in Schedule 1)
- non-prescription drugs (refers to drugs in Schedule 2, Schedule 3, and unscheduled drugs)

DRUG ERROR

A drug incident where the drug has been released or administered to the client.

GLOSSARY

DRUG INCIDENT

Any preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate drug use or client harm.

EVIDENCE-INFORMED

A formalized process which involves identifying, searching for, and interpreting the result of the best available evidence to inform decision-making processes.

INFORMED CONSENT

Receiving the client's permission to proceed with a proposed service following a process of decision-making leading to an informed choice. Informed consent involves ongoing communication between the parties involved. In the case of a minor or others who do not have the capacity to provide informed consent, the agreement must come from a legal guardian or substitute decisionmaker legally authorised to act on behalf of a client.

PRESCRIBE

Throughout this standard, the term prescribe refers to prescribing a Schedule 1 drug included in the **Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation [will be updated with Bill 46 amendments]**.

SELL

Includes (i) distributing, trading or bartering for money or other valuable consideration, (ii) distributing and giving away without expectation or hope of compensation or reward, (iii) keeping for sale, and (iv) offering for sale ([Government Organization Act](#)).