

Standards of Practice



DRUGS: GENERAL

This Standard of Practice applies to the use of both prescription and non-prescription **drugs** and natural health products in the practice of dental hygiene.

All dental hygienists may administer, recommend, **sell**, provide, or **compound** drugs for patients as part of the practice of dental hygiene.

Dental hygienists who apply for and receive approval from the College may **prescribe** Schedule 1 drugs as listed in section 8(d) of the [Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation](#). The dental hygienist who prescribes Schedule 1 drugs must also comply with the [Drugs: Prescribing Standard of Practice](#).

STANDARD STATEMENT

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

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

The dental hygienist must...

1. Utilize prescription and non-prescription drugs and natural health products appropriately within their practice of dental hygiene, competencies, practice setting, 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 appropriate patient assessments, including medical and **medication history**.
4. Identify and use **evidence-informed** best practice guidelines and resources regarding drug therapies used in the practice of dental hygiene. 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.

5. Apply critical thinking to ensure that the drug therapy is appropriate and aligns with the patient's oral health goals.
6. Support the patient's informed choices and obtain **informed consent** in accordance with the College's [Informed Consent Standard of Practice](#). This also includes discussing the following with the patient:
 - a) The rationale for the selection of a particular drug; and
 - b) Implications of using drug therapy.
7. 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 patient **record** and complete medication history;
 - b) Documenting the administration of drugs in accordance with applicable legislation, standards, and guidelines; and
 - c) Documenting drugs recommended, prescribed, sold, or provided.
8. 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.
9. 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; and
 - d) Participating in the [Canada Vigilance Program](#), Health Canada's post-market surveillance program for reported adverse drug reactions.

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

10. 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; and
 - c) Safeguarding drugs and not leaving drugs unattended.
11. Ensure the patient record contains:
 - a) The date and time the drug was administered;
 - b) The route of administration;

- c) The name, strength, dose, and dosage form of the drug;
- d) The reason for administering the drug and the patient's response; and
- e) Identification of the dental hygienist who administered the drug.

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

12. Consider appropriate information about the patient's condition to make a professional judgment on whether to:
 - a) Recommend a non-prescription drug;
 - b) Recommend another treatment or no treatment; or
 - c) Refer the patient to another appropriate health professional.
13. Provide the patient with relevant information to enable the patient 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) Administration instructions, and possible drug or food interactions, if applicable.
14. Record the recommendation of non-prescription drugs in the patient record, including:
 - a) The date the drug was recommended;
 - b) Reason for recommending the drug;
 - c) Identification of the dental hygienist who recommended the drug; and
 - d) Details of the name, strength, dose, and dosage form of the drug, if provided to the patient.

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

15. Store all drugs for provision or sale in a location and manner that does not allow patients to self-select the drugs.
16. Provide the patient with sufficient information to enable the patient 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) Administration instructions, and possible drug or food interactions, if applicable.
17. Hand the drug directly to the patient. If the drug is being released to a **patient's agent**, the dental hygienist must:
 - a) Confirm that the person is authorized to act as an agent for the patient;

- b) Provide the agent with the adequate information described above, if the dental hygienist is satisfied that it is in the patient's best interest to do so; and
 - c) Where possible, communicate verbally with the patient.
18. 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 patient, not suitable for the drug, or not readily available.
19. 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, humidity, 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 patient 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; and
 - viii. The expiry date for the drug.
20. Ensure the accuracy of the drug being provided.
21. Record the sale or provision of the drug in the patient record. This includes:
- a) The date the drug was provided;
 - b) The name, strength, and dosage form of the drug;
 - c) The drug identification number (DIN) of the drug;
 - d) The quantity of the drug provided;
 - e) Reason for sale or provision of the drug; and

- f) Identification of the dental hygienists who provided the drug.
22. Only provide or sell compounded drugs when it is not reasonably possible for the patient to obtain the drug from a pharmacy.

PATIENT EXPECTATION

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

GLOSSARY

ADVERSE DRUG EVENT: An unexpected and undesired incident related to drug therapy that results an adverse outcome for a patient, including injury or complication.

COMPOUND: As defined in the [Health Professions Act](#), means 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.

DRUG: May also be referred to as medication. 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: Any drug incident (see definition) where the drug has been released or administered to the patient.

DRUG INCIDENT: Any preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate drug use or patient harm.

EVIDENCE-INFORMED: The integration of best available evidence with clinical expertise and patient values¹. This approach involves identifying, searching for, and interpreting the result of the best available evidence to inform decision-making processes.²

INFORMED CONSENT: Receiving the patient's written or verbal 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 decision-maker legally authorized to act on behalf of a patient.

MEDICATION HISTORY: The medication history is part of the patient's comprehensive medical history. This assessment includes the patient's use of prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs, and natural health products. The patient's medication history aids the dental hygienist in determining possible contraindications and adverse effects, such as drug-drug and drug-food interactions.

¹Straus, S. E., Glasziou, P., Richardson, W. S., & Haynes, R. B. (2019) Evidence-Based Medicine: How to Practice and Teach EBM (5th ed). Elsevier.

² Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada. (2021) Entry-to-Practice Canadian Competencies for Dental Hygienists. Accessed from: www.fdhrc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/EPCCoDH_FDHR November 2021.pdf

PATIENT'S AGENT: A family member, caregiver or another individual who has a close personal relationship with the patient.

PRESCRIBE: Throughout this standard, the term prescribe refers to prescribing a Schedule 1 drug listed in 8(d) of the [Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation](#).

RECORD: As defined in the [Health Information Act](#), means a record of health information in any form and includes notes, images, audiovisual recordings, x-rays, books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers and papers, and any other information that is written, photographed, recorded, or stored in any manner, but does not include software or any mechanism that produces records.

SELL: As defined in the [Health Professions Act](#), 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.