

MODIFICATIONS OF SCOPE RELATED TO NALOXONE

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The Nova Scotia College of Nursing is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by its registrants.

What is naloxone?

Naloxone is a medication that blocks or reverses the effects of opioids and is used to treat opioid overdose or poisoning in an emergency situation.

Is it within my scope of practice to administer naloxone?

Yes, client assessment and administration of medication is within the legislated scope of practice for all nurses. Additionally, the Nursing Act 174(1) authorizes LPNs and RNs to:

- Administer naloxone as a life-saving measure under their own authority; and,
- Provide take-home naloxone kits under their own authority.

What does “under my own authority” mean?

This means you can autonomously or independently administer naloxone intranasally or intramuscularly or provide a take-home kit to clients based on your own client assessment. You will no longer require an authorizing mechanism such as a prescription, order, or [care directive](#); however, you must follow your employer policies as this only applies in the workplace. Intravenous administration of naloxone requires an authorizing mechanism.

What do I need to be able to administer naloxone under my own authority?

To meet your [standards of practice](#), you must possess the knowledge, skill and judgement ([competence](#)) to recognize potential opioid poisoning situations when autonomously or independently providing naloxone as a lifesaving measure. In addition, you must possess the competence to assess and determine when an at-risk client would benefit from receiving take-home naloxone and be able to educate clients and their significant others regarding the appropriate use of naloxone.

Do I need to complete additional education to provide naloxone?

Administration or provision of naloxone is currently within the nursing scope of practice and most nurses already possess the competence to do this. You should work with your employer if you feel you need additional education or support in recognizing an opioid poisoning situation or administering naloxone under your own authority.

What should my employer provide to support this practice?

Employers should develop and implement policies and processes to support nurses to provide naloxone intranasally, intramuscularly or provide a take-home kit under their own authority. You are accountable to advocate for and contribute to the development of these policies and to follow them when providing naloxone. We encourage you to reach out to NSCN with any additional questions or comments you may have.

Please email practice@nscn.ca for additional information.