

Practice Guideline

Immunizations

Revised: October 2017

Introduction

The [College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia](#) (CLPNNS), or the College, is the [regulatory body](#) for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) in Nova Scotia. The College's [mandate](#) is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical, and compassionate nursing services. The College sets, monitors, and enforces standards for entry into the profession, practical nurse education, registration, and professional conduct. The College creates [Standards of Practice](#), establishes a [Code of Ethics](#), develops and implements a [Continuing Competence Program](#), and publishes policies and [interpretive documents](#) to support the practice of LPNs in Nova Scotia.

Using this Document

Practice guidelines outline the LPN's accountability in specific practice contexts. These guidelines reflect relevant legislation and are designed to help licensed practical nurses understand their responsibilities and legal obligations so they make safe, competent, and ethical nursing decisions. This document can be used with CLPNNS Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, and applicable practice guidelines found on the College website at www.clpnns.ca.

Professional Practice

The College supports the optimization of LPN practice within the clinical parameters defined by employers. Each LPN is accountable for conducting a self-assessment of their individual capacity and working with their employer to take the necessary steps to address knowledge gaps so they are continually prepared to provide safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services.

Immunizations

Licensed Practical Nurses provide immunization services¹ in a variety of settings including: hospitals, long term care centers, community agencies, clinics and clients' homes. LPNs are responsible to assess the health status of clients before, during and after the administration of immunizations and predict and manage any adverse effects.

¹ Includes: immunizations, vaccinations, allergy testing and desensitizing medications



Suite 302, Starlite Gallery
7071 Bayers Road
Halifax, NS B3L 2C2

Phone (902) 423-8517
Fax (902) 425-6811
Toll Free in NS 1-800-718-8517

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Administration of Immunizations

LPNs are required to attain competence in the administration of immunizations *before* they can engage in the practice. Competence can be achieved by successfully completing post-graduate education in the administration of immunizations². Immunizing without completing the necessary advanced education may be considered professional misconduct and subject the LPN to discipline or liability. The responsibility of verifying the LPN's competence as it relates to immunization rests with the employer and the nurse³.

Nursing Management of Anaphylaxis

As part of the immunization process, LPNs are expected to attain competence in the management⁴ of anaphylaxis or other allergic reactions. LPNs may do this independently or in collaboration with other health care providers, depending on the practice context.

Clients Under the Age of 5

LPNs must complete employer based education specific to immunization of clients under the age of five *in addition* to post-graduate immunization education before they can engage in this practice. Typically, structured post-graduate immunization courses provide an introduction to infant and child immunizations. The information, though helpful, is not comprehensive enough to support LPNs in this practice.

Determining Appropriate Practice Context

LPNs are expected to use their professional judgment as they prepare to immunize a client. They are expected to consider the immunization within the client's broader health care needs and ongoing health challenges. They should also recognize when the presence of other health issues or client circumstances⁵ increases the risk for an untoward outcome. The more risk associated with the immunization, the more likely the LPN **should** consult, collaborate or refer the client to an appropriate care provider before administering the medication.

² Post-graduate education can be community college, private trainer, facility or employer based. LPNs must be in possession of documentation (certificate of completion, employer letter on employer letterhead) to validate program completion.

³ The College does not review or approve immunization courses. Any LPN in possession of documentation of successful completion of such a program may engage in its practice in appropriate contexts and is accountable to remain current and competent. The LPN is expected to perform their own due diligence when researching immunization programs. There is no different classification of LPN licensure for those possessing a post-graduate certificate in immunizations.

⁴ Including administration of anaphylaxis medications

⁵ For example: Clients who have a history of reaction of immunizations or clients living in areas where access to Emergency Health Services (if needed) is more difficult.

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Immunization Clinics

LPNs with the necessary immunization competence⁶ are authorized to independently manage immunization clinics for clients from the general population⁷ within their employer's policies. LPNs *may* be authorized to independently manage clinics for clients with a higher risk for reaction (i.e., allergy to ingredient) as long as the employer has sufficient processes in place to support both the client and the LPN as necessary. LPNs work in collaboration with other health care providers when immunizing high risk clients (i.e., history of reaction, co-morbidities and other significant and active illnesses). Employers should have processes in place to support consultation and collaboration as necessary.

Resources

Code of Ethics: <http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/IJLPN-CE-Final.pdf>

Entry to Practice Competencies: <http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/IJLPN-ETPC-Final.pdf>

Medication Administration Practice Guideline: <http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Medication-Administration-Final1.pdf>

Medication Administration Self-Assessment Guideline: <http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Medication-Self-Assessment.pdf>

Medication Administration Decision Tree: <http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Decision-Trees.pdf>

Standards of Practice: <http://clpnns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Standards-of-Practice-for-LPNS-in-Canada.pdf>

⁶ Through the completion of post-graduate immunization education.

⁷ General population clinics are one whereby individuals chose to attend on their own behalf. It is assumed, unless otherwise assessed by the nurse, the individual member of the general population is healthy. Includes both adults and school-aged clinics.