



## Medication Management Policy and Clinical Practice Guidelines

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Applies To:	Pharmacy, Nursing, Medical Staff		

### POLICY

IWK Health Centre strives to ensure safe and effective handling of natural health products for patients admitted and cared for at the IWK Health Centre. This policy excludes products obtained through the Special Access Program and investigational (research) drugs.

The IWK Health Centre Formulary includes select forms of vitamins and minerals. However, since there is limited scientific data available to support the safe and effective use of many natural health products especially herbal remedies, homeopathic medicine and traditional medicine they are not usually included on the Formulary.

The IWK Health Centre staff shall not purchase/acquire, prepare or dispense non-formulary natural products, but there may be special circumstances whereby requests shall be addressed on a case by case basis.

If anticipated length of stay is ~7 days or less, most natural health products (NPH) shall be held unless there is a defined therapeutic effect based on available evidence.

#### Exclusion:

The policy does not include probiotics. Probiotics are not considered medications, as such, are not procured, stocked nor distributed by Pharmacy.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The IWK is committed to providing the best, patient-centred healthcare, and wishes to support those of its patients, and their families, who choose to integrate complementary health practices (CHPs) and natural products safely into conventional care provided by the IWK. Unfortunately, there is a common public misconception that if a product is “natural”, then it is safe. Many natural health products are being sold without a Health Canada license, i.e. they are not regulated, monitored for adverse effects or subject to recall. These are risks and limitations that must be considered. The decision to use natural health products must be an informed one. The patient or substitute decision maker (SDM) should show an awareness of the risks, potential for unknown risks, as well as any benefits of the therapy, if known. As with other non-formulary medications, patients should acquire their own supply to be used while in hospital and if the natural products are to be continued after admission.

The effects of using these products in conjunction with conventional treatments are also not well studied and there can be unknown risks.

## GUIDELINES

### Staff Member Conducting Best Possible Medication History (BPMH) on Admission

- Document all natural health products taken by patient as part of medication history.

### Staff Member Conducting Medication Reconciliation on Admission

- Discuss with patient/parent/SDM treatment alternatives and document the conversation in detail in the progress notes, including a description of the status of conventional treatment and the potential interaction between that treatment and the natural product(s). For example, any concerns with the delay in further conventional evaluation or treatment brought about by the natural product should be charted. Pre-op considerations with respect to recommendations for stopping natural health products before surgery should also be addressed. (IWK Patient Handout PL# 0185)
- When the natural products are discontinued by the admitting prescriber, but the patient/family/SDM wishes to continue taking the products, then a **Natural Products Waiver (Form IWKSEAD)** must be completed with patient/parent/SDM, ensuring full understanding of the document. Once the waiver is signed by the prescriber, the original is placed in the patient’s permanent health record and a copy is given to the patient/family/SDM.

### Nursing

- When natural products are continued and prescribed, they must be verified (as soon as possible) by pharmacy. The care area clinical pharmacist should be consulted initially if available. Pharmacy/clinical pharmacist will provide assistance with verification/identification of these products between the hours of 0800-1600h (Children’s Health and Mental Health and Addictions) or 0700-1500h (Women’s

Health), Monday-to-Friday (excluding holidays). Otherwise, the main dispensary should be contacted.

- If pharmacy is closed, the prescriber should be contacted when the medication is due for administration. Natural products should be stored, administered and recorded as per other medications brought into hospital by patients. When a product is found inappropriate for use or not approved for use by the approved prescriber or pharmacist, then nursing is not authorized to administer the product. Document this in the permanent health record progress notes.
- All orders for natural products should be scanned to pharmacy.
- When natural products are discontinued, products should be sent home and not stored with other medications within the care area. Alternatively, the main pharmacy dispensary may store until patient is discharged.
- When natural products are discontinued by the prescriber and the patient/family/SDM wishes to continue, nursing shall ensure that the waiver is completed and placed on the patient permanent health record. Medications should be stored safely in the patient room away from children and other patients. The waiver is placed on the patient's health record. Self-administration should also be recorded in Nursing Progress notes in case the product adversely impacts the patient's health during their admission.

### Pharmacy

- Pharmacy provides literature, upon request and where available, on the use of the natural health products.
- The pharmacist verifies appropriateness for use of natural products that the prescriber wishes to continue.
- Where possible, the pharmacist checks for drug-drug and drug-disease or surgical interactions and deals with any identified issues.
- At a minimum, products must be licensed by Health Canada, include a NPN (natural products number) and be in their original container.
- When continued and product has been verified, they will be entered in Meditech as "*Natural Health Product(s) Verified for Use*" with the exact name(s) in the Label Comments section. No strength or directions should be included
- If ordered to be continued by the prescriber and product has not been verified for use by pharmacy, it will be entered in Meditech as *Natural Product "NOT Verified for Use"* with the exact name(s) in the Label Comments section. No strength or directions should be included.
- If a natural product is discontinued, it is not entered in the patient's Meditech profile.
  - When discontinued and the patient/family/SDM wishes to continue taking, they should not be entered in patient's Meditech profile, since a waiver should have been completed.

**Prescriber**

- Reviews completed Medication Reconciliation Form (*ID- IWKMEREME*) before signing.
- Checks “discontinue” on the Medication Reconciliation form to indicate any natural product not to be taken while the patient is in the health centre.
- Discontinues NHP unless there is a defined therapeutic effect based on available evidence if anticipated length of stay is 7 days or less
- Reviews with patient and signs Natural Products Waiver (*Form IWKSEAD*) for patients who wish to self-administer natural health product despite a “discontinue” order and against medical advice.
- Post Partum Patients on Family Newborn Care (effective August 1, 2017)
  - All vitamins, minerals and natural health products listed on the patient’s Best Possible Medication History and Order Form ID IWKMERE will be automatically discontinued, without clarification, and not administered during admission.
  - If the length of stay becomes extended (greater than 3 days) or there is a need to reorder for select patients, prescribers or pharmacists may do so as a separate order using Blank Order Form ID IWKORSH. Examples include Vitamin A, B6, B12, B50, B Complex, C, D, E, all forms of iron, calcium, magnesium, folic acid, calcium & Vitamin D, omega 3 or fish oils...
  - Prenatal vitamins are excluded.

**Patient/Family/Substitute Decision Maker (SDM)**

- When a patient/family/SDM wishes to continue taking natural health product(s) despite an order to discontinue, the patient/SDM signs the Natural Products Waiver (*Form ID IWK\_SEAD*):
  - Obtains a supply of the natural health product(s).
  - Takes responsibility for proper self administration and storage of the natural health product(s) in a secure place separate from other inpatient medications.

**REFERENCES**

Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database [www.naturaldatabase.com](http://www.naturaldatabase.com)

Health Canada - Drugs and Natural Products (List of Licensed Natural Health Products) [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) ( <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/prodnatur/index-eng.php> )

Natural Standard - The Authority on Integrative Medicine [www.naturalstandard.com](http://www.naturalstandard.com)

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

### **Policies**

- Policy 3.90 - Medications Brought into Hospital by Patients
- Policy 10.11 - 24 Hour Medication Administration Record (cMAR)
- Policy 10.30 - Medication Reconciliation
- Policy 702 - Complementary Health Practices
- Policy 20.60 – Self Administration of Medications
- Policy 124.0 – Consent to Treatment

### **Forms**

- Medication Reconciliation Medication History & Order Sheet Admission - Form ID IWK\_MEREME
- Natural Products Waiver - Form ID IWK\_SEAD
- IWK Patient Handout PL#0185

## APPENDIX A

### DEFINITION

Natural Health Products are sold without a prescription and include vitamins and minerals, herbal remedies, homeopathic medicine, traditional medicine, amino acids and essential fatty acids. Natural Health Products licensed by Health Canada include a Natural Product Number (NPN) or Homeopathic Medicine Number (DIN-HM). Products with a license have been assessed by Health Canada and found to be safe, effective and of high quality under the conditions recommended for their use. They can also be searched for in the Natural Health Products Database. *(Natural Health Product Regulations Jan 2004)*

Note: for the purposes of this policy, probiotics are excluded.

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### Version History

Major Revisions (e.g. Standard 4 year review)	Minor Revisions (e.g. spelling correction, wording changes, etc.)
	December 2016 – exclusion of probiotics
	July 2021 Added information on Postpartum Patients that was previously contained Within Policy 1.40 Formulary System. No Change to the information itself.