

# Care Directive



**Care Directive Title:** Care Directive for Registered Nurses in the Pessary Clinic to Perform Vaginal Nugent Swabs

**Applies To:** Registered Nurses and Physicians Women’s and Newborn Health Program Ambulatory Clinic

**Location Applicability:** IWK Health

**Approved:**  
IWK Policy & Practice  
Nov 8, 2022  
IWK Drugs & Therapeutics  
Dec 6, 2022  
Medical Advisory Committee  
Sept 19, 2023

**Effective:**  
October 30, 2023

**Next Review:**  
October 2023

**Sponsor:** Manager, Women’s Ambulatory, Perioperative and Breast Health

**Approval Authority:** IWK Policy & Practice  
IWK Drugs & Therapeutics  
Medical Advisory Committee

**Number:** 50036

**Manual:** Women’s & Newborn Health, Ambulatory Clinics

## Contents

PURPOSE .....	2
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES .....	2
POLICY STATEMENTS .....	2
PROCEDURE.....	3
REFERENCES .....	4
Legislative Acts/References .....	4
RELATED DOCUMENTS .....	5
Policies .....	5
Appendices .....	5

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Appendix A – Definitions ..... 6

## PURPOSE

Vaginal discharge is a common experience among pessary users and can be more pronounced with use of a gelhorn pessary. It can be caused by a normal response to contact between the pessary and the vaginal mucosa. Bacterial vaginosis (BV) can cause foul smelling vaginal discharge. Yeast infections may also cause abnormal discharge and discomfort (Harvey, Lemieux, Robert & Shulz, 2021). If copious discharge is seen, a nugent swab is recommended to rule out bacterial vaginosis and yeast infection.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

To passionately pursue a healthy future with women, children, youth, and families in all their diversity through excellence in care, research and innovation and applied learning.

## POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Registered nurses (RNs) practicing in the Women’s and Newborn Health Program (WNHP) 6A Women’s Ambulatory Clinics at IWK Health, have the authority to perform *Care Directive for Registered Nurses in the Pessary Clinic to Perform Vaginal Nugent Swabs* on patients in the Pessary Clinic, without a patient specific order from an authorized prescriber based on the RNs assessment, clinical judgement and the protocol outlined in this care directive.
2. Specific patient conditions must be met before the care directive can be implemented.

***Inclusion criteria include:***

- Increased malodorous vaginal discharge

***Exclusion criteria include:***

- None

3. *Care Directive for Registered Nurses in the Pessary Clinic to perform Vaginal Nugent Swabs* can be initiated by RNs who have been oriented and are practicing in the WNHP 6A Women’s Ambulatory Clinics at IWK Health in the Pessary Clinic. There must be:

- 3.1 Demonstrated competence including successful completion of the education and training and ongoing recertification to perform the pessary fitting, insertion and ongoing management, a Beyond Entry Level Competency (BELC).
  - 3.2 Successful completion of all components of the educational program (initial and ongoing competence) will be documented as per unit/team procedure.
  - 3.3 Demonstration of ongoing technical competence and proficiency in performing the skill under the supervision of a certified practitioner.
4. The RN must be accountable and responsible to self-assess their competency in *performing vaginal nugen swabs*. If the skill is beyond the level of knowledge, skill and expertise, the RN must act and address any knowledge gaps to ensure safe care.
  5. A physician or approved prescriber must be available for consultation and follow up either on the unit or by telephone in a timely manner.

## PROCEDURE

1. Clean hands and apply personal protective equipment (e.g. clean gloves) as per Point of Care Risk Assessment. Refer to IWK Health Policy # 201.1 Application of Routine Practices.
2. The nugen swab is inserted into the vagina and gently rotated for 5-10 seconds ensuring sample of posterior, anterior and lateral walls of the vagina.
3. Insert swab into tube and close cap.
4. Make sure the swab is labelled with the patient label, time the swab was collected and specimen label.
5. Copy primary care provider on the requisition.
6. Transport to lab as per clinic process.

**Care Directive Approval for use:**

This care directive is approved for use by the following authorized prescriber(s):



**Dr. Baharak Amir, Urogynecologist**



**Dr. Anita Smith, Urogynecologist**



**Dr. Marianne Pierce, Urogynecologist**

## REFERENCES

### Legislative Acts/References

Nova Scotia College of Nursing. (Revised 2023). Care Directive Guidelines for Registered Nurses retrieved from <https://www.nscn.ca/professional-practice/practice-support/practice-support-tools/care-directives/care-directive-guidelines>

Harvey M, Lemieux M, Robert M, & Schulz J. (2021). Guideline no 411: Vaginal pessary use. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada (JOGC)*, 2021-02-01, Volume 43, Issue 2, Pages 255-266.

Martell B, Kushner H, Richardson E, Mize A, & Mayer P. (2017). Pharmacokinetics of lidocaine and its metabolites following vaginal administration of lidocaine gel to healthy female subjects. *Clinical Pharmacology in Drug Development*, 6(1): 27-35.

Mendelson J, Grigorescu B, Quinn C, & Lazarou G. (2021). Pessaries and rectovaginal fistulae: Consequences of delayed clinical follow up in COVID-19 pandemic. *International Urogynecology Journal*. 2021(32), 2353-2356.

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Robert S, Shultz JA, & Harvey. (2013). Technical update on pessary use. SOCG Technical update. JOGC, 294: 664-672.

Taege S, Adams W, Mueller E, Brubaker L, Fitzgerald C, & Brincat C. (2017). Anesthetic Cream Use During Office Pessary Removal and Replacement, *Obstetrics & Gynecology: 130* (1): 190-197. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000002098

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

### **Policies**

[IWK Health Policy # 3050 Pessary Fitting, Insertion, and Management](#)

[IWK Health Policy # 201.1 Application of Routine Practices](#)

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Definitions

## Appendix A – Definitions

**Care Directive:** A care directive (CD) is an order or authorization, which exists as an organizational policy and is developed and approved by an authorized prescriber and the organization for an intervention or series of interventions. A CD is meant to be implemented by another care provider for a range of clients with identified health conditions, in specific circumstances. The purpose of a care directive is to provide safe, timely, effective and efficient client care and to optimize the practice of all care providers. (Nova Scotia College of Nurses, 2023).

**Pessary:** A non-invasive device to be placed inside the vaginal canal to support the pelvic organs and/or correct a displacement (Harvey, Lemiux, Robert, & Schulz, 2021).

## IWK/NSH Policy Documents Being Replaced

(Please List)

### Version History

(To Be Completed by the Policy Office)

<b>Major Revisions (e.g. Standard 4 year review)</b>	<b>Minor Revisions (e.g. spelling correction, wording changes, etc.)</b>