

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GOVERNMENT OF NUNAVUT OPERATIONAL POLICY

Take-Home Medication Policy

Policy Reference #: Pharmacy T-1

Section: Pharmacy

Responsibility: Pharmacy

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Approved by: Medical Advisory Committee

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 To facilitate discharge from the Inpatient Unit, Emergency Department or Day Surgery, the Qikiqtani General Hospital and Kivalliq Health Centre allow dispensing of medications by Registered Nurses from hospital stock under certain conditions.

2.0 PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Dispensing medications to patients from hospital stock upon discharge is discouraged. Every attempt possible should be made to have any medications required by a patient on discharge dispensed by a retail pharmacy.
- 2.2 **Take-home medications may only be dispensed from hospital stock for a patient when:**
 1. **The retail pharmacy is closed and medication doses will be required before it re-opens; or**
 2. **The prescriber requests that up to a 24-hour supply be dispensed.**
- 2.3 A Registered Nurse may only dispense medications upon an order from a physician or nurse practitioner (NP).
- 2.4 Only the minimum number of doses required until the retail pharmacy is open may be dispensed from hospital stock or up to a 24-hour supply as requested by the prescriber.
- 2.5 The physician or nurse practitioner must clearly document in the patient's chart the number of doses to be dispensed.

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- 2.6 Safety cap medication vials and labels are available from the Stores department to facilitate dispensing.
- 2.7 The Registered Nurse will verify the patient's allergy status prior to preparing the take-home medications.
- 2.8 The Registered Nurse preparing the take-home medications will ensure the following information is written on the label affixed to the vial of medication:
- Patient Name
 - Date
 - Drug name
 - Drug strength
 - Drug dose
 - Drug frequency
 - Quantity dispensed
 - Doctor's name
 - Any instructions specific to the drug
- 2.9 The Registered Nurse must indicate beside the physician or NP's order for take-home medications the quantity they have dispensed to the patient. The take-home medications prepared for the patient by one Registered Nurse must be verified and signed by a second Registered Nurse.
- 2.10 The Registered Nurse dispensing the take-home medications must also document in the patient's electronic health record that take-home medications were provided to the patient.
- 2.11 If any take-home medications are provided for a portion of a course of therapy (e.g., antibiotics), the retail pharmacy prescription should accurately reflect the quantity remaining to be dispensed to complete the course.

3.0 APPLICATION

- 3.1 The policy applies to all staff at Qikiqtani General Hospital and Kivalliq Health Centre.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Take-Home Medication: Any medication dispensed from hospital stock for a patient upon discharge.