

# Medication Samples

## 1. Introduction

The promotion of [Medication Samples](#) by the pharmaceutical industry is widespread in Canada. Appropriate management of drug samples in all patient care settings requires a system of checks and balances to ensure patient safety, including proper labelling, prevention of medication errors, complete patient monitoring, appropriate tracking, i.e. PharmaNet entry, and attention to expiry dates.

### 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to outline processes for accessing, receiving, storing, dispensing, documenting, handling medication recalls, and disposing of Medication Samples.

### 1.2. Scope

This Policy focuses on handling Medication Samples within Fraser Health, Providence Health Care, and Vancouver Coastal Health.

### 1.3. Exceptions

The Policy does not address study drugs (clinical trials approved by an ethics board).

## 2. Policy

### Inpatients (Including Emergency Department admitted and non-admitted patients)

- 2.1 Vendors shall not distribute [Medication Samples](#) or [Drug Sample Cards](#) to patients or to staff of inpatient units. Also refer to Drug Vendor Relations policies:
  - [Lower Mainland Drug Vendor Relations Policy](#) – PHC
  - [Lower Mainland Drug Vendor Relations Policy](#) – VCH
- 2.2 All medication samples shall be received by Pharmacy Services with prior approval by the Director, Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services (LMPS)
- 2.3 Patient's own supply of Medication Samples brought into the hospital may be approved for use, adhering to established processes set forth in the policies entitled Non Formulary and Excluded Drugs and Health Authority policies regarding Patient's Own Medications:
  - [Patient's Own Medications](#) - PHC
  - [Patient's Own Medication](#) - VCH

### Outpatients and Community Settings

- 2.4 [Providers](#) shall preferentially consider the use of Drug Sample Cards over Medication Samples for their outpatients.

- 2.4.1 Drug Sample Cards are the preferred method in order to facilitate medication dispensing by a community pharmacy, and entry into PharmaNet.
- 2.5 Providers shall approve receipt of Medication Samples left at premises.
  - 2.5.1 If Medication Samples are accepted, Providers should approve only those medications that are appropriate for use by their clinic / office.
  - 2.5.2 No narcotic and controlled drugs are to be accepted.
- 2.6 Drug vendors shall provide Medication Samples to the Provider. [Nurses](#) may receive Medication Samples on behalf of the Provider.
  - 2.6.1 Drug vendors shall not have access to Medication Sample storage areas.
- 2.7 Providers and/or Nurses shall ensure that established processes for receiving, storing, dispensing, documentation, handling medication recalls, and disposal are adhered to for all Medication Samples, as outlined in the procedures.
- 2.8 Lack of compliance with this policy will lead to the removal and destruction of Medication Samples.

### **3. Procedures for Outpatient and Community Settings**

#### **Order**

##### **Provider**

- 3.1 Approve Medication Samples left at premises.

#### **Receipt**

##### **Provider or Nurse**

- 3.2 Providers are responsible for receiving Medication Samples from the vendor. Nurses may receive Medication Samples from the vendor on behalf of the Provider.
- 3.3 Ensure that the receipt of Medication Samples is documented on a log that includes date, drug name, form, strength, quantity, manufacturer, lot number, expiry date, and name of health care Provider who received the medication sample.
  - 3.3.1 See [Appendix A: Medication Samples Log](#) as an example

#### **Storage**

- 3.4 Ensure Medication Samples are stored in the appropriate space, temperature and light conditions, as directed by the manufacturer.
- 3.5 Ensure Medication Samples are safely and securely stored, accessible only by authorized personnel (Providers, Nursing staff, Pharmacy staff)
- 3.6 Ensure that expired sample medications are removed from the active medication inventory

- 3.6.1 Check sample medications for expiry dates, once monthly
- 3.6.2 Separate expired medications from other medications and ensure they are securely stored until disposal
- 3.7 Properly dispose of expired medications. Refer to Health Organization policies:
  - [Disposal: Acute Care – Pharmaceutical Wastage](#) – VCH
  - [Waste: Pharmaceutical Waste Disposal in Acute Care](#) - PHC
- 3.8 Ensure that Medication Samples that have been [recalled](#) are removed from the active medication inventory, disposed of appropriately, and patients are contacted, where appropriate

### **Dispensing**

In order to enhance patient safety, the standards for dispensing Medication Samples set forth in this procedure are the same as those required in a community pharmacy. Nurses who dispense Medication Samples from an outpatient or community setting, if circumventing a community pharmacy, shall adhere to limits and conditions outlined in:

- [B.C. College of Nurses and Midwives – Learning Resources – Dispensing Medication](#)
- [Dispensing Medications \(Nurses\)](#) – PHC Protocol
- [Community Medication Standard](#) – VCH Standard
- [Nurse Independent Medication Administration and Dispensing to Treat Common Primary Care Conditions](#) - VCH Guideline

### **Provider or Nurse**

- 3.9 Provider to ensure pharmaceutical and therapeutic suitability as follows:
  - Review medication for potential drug interactions, contraindications, therapeutic duplication
  - Check and confirm patient's history of medication allergies and adverse reactions
  - Prepare the medication label, ensuring the following information is included:
    - Facility name, address, and phone number
    - Patient name
    - Prescriber's name
    - Date dispensed
    - Medication name, form, strength, route
    - Directions for use
    - Quantity
    - Initials of health care Provider who dispensed the medication
    - Auxiliary information pertinent to the medication (e.g. take on empty stomach, store in refrigerator, etc.)
- 3.10 Check the medication expiry date ensuring that the medication supply, if used as directed,

will be completed prior to the stated expiry date

3.11 Place the medication in a child-resistant container and label the container.

3.11.1 All medication must be dispensed in a child-resistance container with exceptions noted in the College of Pharmacists of B.C. [Community Pharmacy Standards of Practice](#).

3.12 Dispense only the quantity of medication as ordered by the Provider

3.13 Give the medication directly to the patient

3.14 Provide patient teaching

### **Documentation**

#### **Provider or Nurse**

3.15 Document the entire transaction in the patient's health record, including:

- Date
- Patient name, address, phone number, date of birth, gender
- Patient allergies and adverse reactions
- Prescriber name
- Medication name, form, strength
- Directions
- Quantity dispensed and duration of therapy
- Directions provided to client
- Name, title and signature of the health care Provider who dispensed the medication
- Education provided for the medication sample

3.16 Document the following on a Medication Samples Log. (See Appendix A – example)

- Date
- Patient name
- Medication name, form, strength
- Quantity dispensed
- Expiry date
- Lot number
- Name and title of health care Provider who dispensed the medication

3.17 Retain the Medication Samples Log for a period of not less than 3 years from the date upon which the medication sample was dispensed.

## **4. Definitions**

***Medication Samples*** are trial packages of medications received free of charge from pharmaceutical vendors/manufacturers.

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**Drug sample cards** are cards provided by drug vendors as a medium for drug cost reimbursement.

**Nurse** includes Registered Nurse, Registered Psychiatric Nurse, and Licensed Practical Nurse.

**Provider** includes physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, and podiatrist.

## 5. References

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## 6. Appendices

- [Appendix A: Medication Samples Log](#)

## Appendix A: Medication Samples Log

## MEDICATION SAMPLES LOG

This is an example of a Medication Samples Log. Medication Samples Logs may vary in format but all components, as depicted in this example, must be included.

[illegible]

Retain form for 3 years from date dispensed

<b>Effective Date:</b>	25 JAN 2021			
<b>First Released:</b>	25 JAN 2021			
<b>Last Revised:</b>	22 NOV 2021			
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	22 NOV 2021			
<b>Approved By:</b>	PHC		VCH - PHC	
	Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee 25 JAN 2021		VCH-PHC Regional Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee 24 FEB 2020 22 NOV 2021	
<b>Owners:</b>	PHC		VCH	
	Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services		Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services	
<b>Revision History:</b> <i>(optional)</i>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description/ Key Changes</b>	<b>Revised By</b>
	1.0	25 JAN 2021	New policy	Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services
	2.0	22 NOV 2021	Revised policy - facilitates prescribing of sample medications by nurse practitioners	Lower Mainland Pharmacy Services

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