

IV Hydration and Vitamin Therapy

Guidance Document

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Practical Nurses of Manitoba
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CLPNM guidance documents are intended to promote understanding of the legislation and professional standards that apply to the practical nursing profession in Manitoba.

Introduction

The CLPNM has received questions about the potential involvement of LPNs in private businesses that offer IV administration fluids, vitamins and minerals. The stated purposes for these infusions include increased energy levels, faster post-sports recovery, hangover relief, improved memory, skin health and improved immune functioning, among others.

While the CLPNM continues to gather information on this emerging area of LPN practice, we wish to remind LPNs that their professional standards apply regardless of the practice context. As with any area of practice, the onus is on the LPN to ensure that their practice is evidence informed, client centred and considers all related risks.

This means that LPNs have a professional obligation to ensure that:

1. The LPN practises within their professional scope of practice.

Administering a medication or substance by parenteral instillation is within the LPN scope of practice. However, it is outside of the LPN scope of practice to prescribe. An LPN always requires a client-specific order from an authorized prescriber to administer a medication or substance by parenteral

instillation. Standing orders alone must not be used to authorize this intervention.

While an order from an authorized prescriber is required, LPNs are reminded that they have a professional responsibility to apply critical thinking in their practice and to question orders that do not appear to be safe or the client's interest.

2. The LPN's interventions are safe and informed by evidence.

The LPN has this obligation even if other health care professionals are involved in the care team and have provided orders for the intervention. The LPN must also ensure the dosage amounts of vitamins, volumes of IV fluids to be administered, and rates of IV administration, are supported by evidence and are not contraindicated or unsafe for their clients.

Infection prevention and control best practices must be followed, as well as safe medication administration principles. All IV fluids, vitamins, and medications must be obtained from an authorized source, noting that products otherwise classified as natural health products are regulated as drugs under federal Food and Drug Regulations if administered by puncturing the dermis.¹ All supplies used must also be obtained from reputable sources.

¹ Health Canada. Email correspondence. October 31, 2024.

The LPN must not recommend products or services or provide interventions for which there is little or no evidence to support client-specific benefits. All claims regarding the wellness or aesthetic benefits of the interventions must accurately reflect the current evidence and must be verifiable. An LPN who participates in the delivery of these services is advised to maintain documentation of the evidence that has informed their practice.

3. The client has given informed consent.

To give informed consent, the client must be informed of the strength of the evidence and the risks relative to the benefits. Clients must also be given advance information regarding full cost of the intervention(s). Clients must also be advised of alternatives to the interventions, including those which may be safer and/or less costly.

For this service, the CLPNM advises registrants to ensure that informed consent is given in writing.

4. The LPN's practice follows the nursing process, which includes assessment, diagnosis/determination, planning, intervention, and evaluation.

In addition to the initial assessment and decision by a prescriber, the client must be assessed by the LPN at every visit, and a determination must be made that no contraindications exist, and that the intervention is safe and in the client's interest, each time. Interventions must not be administered to clients who are not appropriate candidates, on the day.

If an LPN is not able to assess to identify contraindications, prior to each intervention, the LPN does not have the competence necessary to engage in this practice.

5. The LPN is prepared to manage medical emergencies.

The LPN must be prepared and capable to initiate nursing interventions in response to an untoward event or adverse reaction. The LPN's actions, in the event of a medical emergency, must be guided by documented policies and procedures.

There must be sufficient equipment, medications, and other health care providers available if required to appropriately respond in the event of a medical emergency.

6. Nursing interventions are documented.

Like all nursing interventions, IV infusions must be documented in a client-specific record. Documentation must demonstrate application of the nursing process, and include evidence of informed consent. All other professional standards related to documentation must also be met.

7. The LPN's practice is guided by policies.

The business must have documented policies and procedures that address, at minimum:

- safe rate and volume for each infusion, and safe dosage,
- measures to prevent exposure to infectious pathogens and communicable conditions,
- referrals to other health care providers when the client's needs are beyond the individual LPN's competence and scope of professional practice,
- collaborative practice when the infusion forms part of a broader plan of care that involves other team members (e.g. a family physician or oncologist), and
- protocols to be followed in the event of a medical emergency.

8. The LPN is involved in ethical business practices.

Advertising, including information available on websites and social media, must not include unsubstantiated claims or claims that cannot be verified. Additionally, advertising must not create unjustified or unreasonable expectations of the results that will be achieved by an LPN's intervention. Advertising that does not meet these guidelines interferes with the client's informed consent, as the information communicated through advertising informs the client's decision.

Recognizing the power imbalance inherent in the nurse-client relationship, nurses must not pressure clients to purchase additional products or services.

If the LPN is an employee of a business, the LPN has a responsibility to collaborate with their employer to ensure the LPN is able to meet the expectations regarding ethical business practices noted above.

If the LPN is an owner/co-owner of a business that offers IV hydration and vitamin therapy, or plans to be, the LPN must ensure they are in compliance with all professional expectations outlined in the CLPNM's Practice Direction on Self-Employed Practice.

Conclusion

LPNs are advised to carefully consider their professional standards and ensure they will be able to meet them before engaging in this practice.

As with any emerging area of LPN practice, further guidance from the CLPNM may be issued in the coming months.

For More Information

Visit our website at www.clpnm.ca for more information and resources. Contact us with questions at 463 St. Anne's Road Winnipeg MB R2M 3C9 Phone: 204-663-1212 Toll Free: 1-877-633-1212 Email: info@clpnm.ca

About the CLPNM

The CLPNM is the governing body for the licensed practical nursing profession in Manitoba. Mandated to govern its members in a manner that serves and protects the public interest, the CLPNM establishes practice requirements for the provision of safe and effective nursing care.

References

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba (CLPNM). Practice Direction on Self-Employed Practice; 2024.

CLPNM. Standards of Practice and Conduct; 2021.

College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan. IV Hydration Therapy; 2023.

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Shane-McWhorter, L. Intravenous Vitamin Therapy (Myers' Cocktail). Merck Manual Consumer Version; March 2024.

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