

# Nursing Foot Care

## Practice Direction

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Practice directions assist practical nurses in understanding their responsibilities and legal obligations, enabling them to make safe and ethical decisions within their practice. Practical nurses are expected to comply with the information disseminated in practice directions. Failure to do so may result in investigation for misconduct and/or an audit of the nurse's practice.

### Purpose

The purpose of this practice direction is to provide LPNs, employers, and the public with important information and considerations regarding nursing foot care practice for LPNs in Manitoba.

### Educational Requirements

Nursing foot care is provided within a holistic context in the promotion of health, maintenance of health, and the prevention of illness; and through the application of the nursing process. The fundamental concepts underlying the provision of nursing foot care are grounded in the theoretical framework of practical nursing education in Manitoba. These fundamental concepts include anatomy and physiology, microbiology, nutrition, preventative health care for the skin and nails, and special nursing considerations and interventions for clients with health conditions which may compromise the integrity of the feet, such as peripheral vascular disease and diabetes.

Licensed practical nurses can perform basic nail care to a variety of clients. However, those who wish to further develop their knowledge, judgment, and skill in the area of nursing foot care require additional post-basic CLPNM-approved education. CLPNM-approved post-basic nursing foot care courses must be designed to expand theoretical knowledge and competencies to equip the LPN with in-depth

knowledge, skill, and judgment related to the practice of nursing foot care.

### Education within Manitoba

A CLPNM-approved nursing foot care course is currently delivered by Assiniboine Community College (ACC) and is composed of 148 hours of instruction. This includes 32 hours practical instruction and 116 hours of theory.

ACC Nursing Foot Care Course Summary	Hours		
	Practical	Theory	Total
Nursing Foot Care Introduction		24	24
Foot Assessment & Intervention		32	32
High Risk Feet – Theory		20	20
High Risk Feet – Clinical	16		16
Diabetic Feet – Theory		20	20
Diabetic Feet – Clinical	16		16
Foot Care – Small Business		20	20
Total Hours	32	116	148

## Education Outside of Manitoba

Although many other provinces offer post-basic education programs in nursing foot care, not all have equivalent content, focus, theoretical hours, practical hours or course objectives. For this reason, the CLPNM does not sanction nursing foot care as an approved practice in Manitoba unless the LPN has successfully completed a CLPNM-approved education program.

## Proof of Eligibility to Practise Nursing Foot Care

Per section 5(1) of the Licensed Practical Nurses Regulation, and for the purpose of clause 7(2)(e) of *The Licensed Practical Nurses Act*, information relating to additional post-basic education completed by the LPN is to be included in the register for each member. Once an LPN successfully completes a CLPNM-approved post-basic nursing foot care course, an original transcript must be submitted to the CLPNM within 60 days, and the CLPNM will make an annotation to the LPN's registration indicating they have attained the necessary education to practise nursing foot care in Manitoba.

Practicing nursing foot care without the proper annotation on the register, or without documented and CLPNM-approved evidence of the required post-basic education, will result in possible investigation for professional misconduct and an audit of the LPN's practice. Barring any current restrictions, conditions, or sanctions imposed, after an LPN has completed a CLPNM-approved post-basic nursing foot care program and has ensured the CLPNM has received the required documentation as outlined above, they are then authorized to practise nursing foot care. The LPN may provide nursing foot care to a variety of clients in hospitals, personal care homes, community health clinics, and private homes.

## The Practice of Foot Care

### General guidance

Licensed practical nurses provide nursing foot care services within the parameters of their education, training, and experience, and in accordance with the Licensed Practical Nurses Act (2001), the CLPNM Standards of Practice, and the CLPNM Code of Ethics. The LPN must recognize a situation where the needs of the client are outside of their individual scope of practice, experience, or competency level, and appropriately seek guidance or refer the client.

### Specific guidance

Nursing foot care interventions are specific to the care of the foot and lower limb, using non-invasive techniques. Reduction of hyperkeratoses (calluses) and helomata (corns) to an intact epidermis by use of files and burrs is within the scope of practice for the LPN who has completed the CLPNM-approved post-basic nursing foot care program.

Reduction of any non-viable tissue (including debridement) by means of a scalpel or other sharp instrument may only be executed by an LPN who has acquired appropriate additional education and training and has submitted proof of successful completion to the CLPNM. Examples of appropriate additional education and training may include the International Inter-professional Wound Care Course delivered via the Canadian Association of Wound Care and enterostomal therapy education via the Canadian Association of Enterostomal Therapists.

Whatever the additional post-basic wound care education obtained, the LPN must have acquired the essential in-depth theoretical knowledge and competencies vital in the provision of wound care and wound debridement. The education must include detailed and specific instruction that enables the LPN to understand the necessary holistic and systematic approach required for the

promotion of wound healing. This knowledge furnishes the LPN with increased comprehension regarding the assessment and appropriate management of the causes, systemic, and local factors that may delay healing. This educational preparation must also prepare the LPN to not only have the required knowledge, skill, and judgment to provide an assessment and treatment of the wound itself but to address client-centered concerns relevant to this area of practice.

Regardless of the syllabus of a given program, the educational program must be assessed and approved by the CLPNM before an LPN having taken that course can be said to have attained the necessary education to practise nursing foot care in Manitoba.

### **Titles and Abbreviations**

While the CLPNM authorizes LPNs with approved post-basic training to practise nursing foot care, it does not maintain a specialized practice register or grant a specialized designation to those who have completed the program.

As such, the CLPNM does not authorize the use of titles, signatures or abbreviations that convey, either directly or by implication, that an LPN has attained a specialized foot care credential. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of:

- The term "certified" in relation to nursing foot care, such as the title "Certified Foot Care Nurse."
- Any abbreviation that implies certification in nursing foot care, such as "CFCN."
- The title foot care nurse as part of the nurse's signature.
- Any abbreviation that implies a specialized foot care credential or designation, including but not limited to the abbreviation "FCN."

The use of such titles and abbreviations provide the impression that a formal foot care

credential has been conferred, or that a higher level of academic certification was achieved, and therefore, may be misleading to the public.

For clarity, it is acceptable, when describing the nurse's practice, to identify that the nurse practices "nursing foot care" or that the nurse is a "foot care nurse," just as it is appropriate for a nurse working in primary care to identify him or herself as a "primary care nurse." Such descriptions provide information about the nurse's area of practice and, when not used in conjunction with "certified" or as part of the nurse's signature, do not imply a professional designation. It is also acceptable for a nurse who has done so to communicate that he or she has successfully completed Assiniboine Community College's Nursing Foot Care program.

### **Employer Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of an employer to verify the manner and level of education and training received by the LPN and to determine current competence in relation to the delivery of nursing foot care services. Whether an LPN practicing foot care is self-employed or works for an organization, employment policies must provide clear directives regarding all aspects of nursing foot care.

### **Independent Practice and Nursing Foot Care**

Licensed practical nurses in independent practice of nursing foot care in Manitoba are expected to comply with the general CLPNM guidelines for independent practice as outlined in the CLPNM Practice Direction on Independent Practice.

### **Further Information**

For further information relevant to nursing foot care and LPN practice in Manitoba, see the

following resources available on the CLPNM website at [www.clpnm.ca](http://www.clpnm.ca):

- Standards of Practice
- Code of Ethics
- Entry-Level Competencies for the Licensed Practical Nurse in Manitoba
- Nursing Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses in Manitoba
- Determining Appropriate LPN Practice
- Information about the CLPNM's Continuing Competence Program

Information is also available from the following external organizations:

- Assiniboine Community College  
[www.assiniboine.net](http://www.assiniboine.net)
- Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses  
[www.cafcnc.ca](http://www.cafcnc.ca)
- Manitoba Association of Foot Care Nurses  
[www.footcarenurse.ca](http://www.footcarenurse.ca)
- Government of Manitoba [www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)  
(including information on [The Personal Health Information Act](#))
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada website at [www.priv.gc.ca](http://www.priv.gc.ca)

Additional questions may be directed to the CLPNM office at 204-663-1212 or 1-877-663-1212 toll free.

### 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

The following resources were consulted in the development of this document.

CLPNM (2004). *Standards of practice*

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Canadian Association of Wound Care (2013). *International interprofessional wound care course.* Retrieved from <http://cawc.net/en/index.php/educational/international-interprofessional-wound-care-course/>

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