



MicroSCOPE



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What's new

Pharmacy Assistants and Compounding

Based on member questions and comments, there seems to be some confusion about the role of pharmacy assistants in compounding

The implementation of the NAPRA Model Standards for Pharmacy Compounding does not change the scope of practice for pharmacy assistants.

Pharmacy assistants can only perform compounding activities for non-sterile non-hazardous preparations once they have been appropriately trained and their competencies have been assessed. The training and assessment must be properly documented in the employee file. Pharmacy assistants are not permitted to be involved in any hazardous compounding or sterile compounding.

The pharmacy assistant's primary role is to provide support to both the pharmacist and pharmacy technician in carrying out the technical functions of the dispensing process.

An assistant can perform tasks for which they have been trained and are competent and works under the direct supervision of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician. They are not authorized to check the work of any other individuals within the pharmacy practice setting. The supervising pharmacist or pharmacy technician accepts responsibility for the actions of the pharmacy assistant as their supervisor.



Acceptable Cleaning Solutions

As a reminder, isopropyl alcohol is not considered an acceptable cleaning solution to be used on work surfaces and equipment.

Isopropyl alcohol is only considered a disinfectant when used following an appropriate cleaning protocol with a cleaning solution as the first step. For non-hazardous, non-sterile compounding, cleaning solutions can be anything from a janitorial grade detergent to a house cleaning liquid.

Most cleaning solutions require a dilution with water; therefore, cleaning protocols, with dilution instructions, must be developed and followed. Additionally, all compounding equipment, instruments, and accessories should be rinsed with purified water and not left to air dry.

Once cleaned and rinsed, all compounding equipment, instruments, and accessories should be dried and stored away neatly in a manner to protect them from contamination.



Hand Hygiene and Compounding

In addition to following the [Hand Hygiene Guidelines and Standards](#), pharmacies are expected to comply with the following as per the NAPRA Model Standards for Pharmacy Compounding.

Gloves

Gloves should always be a part of the personnel protective equipment routinely worn for all compounding activities, as well as when performing any activities involving the handling of medications (i.e., compliance packaging). This protects both the staff member handling the drug from absorbing the drug through the skin, as well as protecting the patient for whom the medication is intended. Gloves utilized should be powder-free and medical-grade gloves.

Fingernails

Proper hand hygiene extends beyond regular hand washing and includes keeping fingernails clean and neatly trimmed short.

To be compliant with the hand hygiene requirements outlined in the NAPRA Model Standards for Pharmacy Compounding means that pharmacy staff involved in compounding activities must not have polish on fingernails or have artificial nails. Nail polish flakes away and can contaminate a compounded product.

In addition, studies have shown that artificial nails can harbour a variety of bacteria and fungi, even with regular hand washing. With this risk, even washing hands and donning gloves, bacteria on the nails would contaminate the gloves as they are put on, increasing the risk to the compounded product. These risks also pose a potential patient harm risk.

Jewelry

Jewelry on hands and wrists is not permitted as any germs and grooves pose risks of harbouring bacteria. If a ring must be worn, it can only be a plain, smooth band with no gems or grooves.

[Learn more](#)



Compounding Consultations

To ensure pharmacies are on the right track towards compliance with the NAPRA Model Standards for Pharmacy Compounding, pharmacy managers and compounding supervisors are encouraged to contact the College's Compounding Inspector, Brittany Sharkey, with their compliance-related questions.

The compounding inspector can assess a pharmacy's proposed compounding area or room through either a scheduled Skype consultation, or by submitting photos of the proposed area or room. In this way, the compounding inspector can provide feedback on any additional measures that may need to be taken for the pharmacy to meet compliance.

Brittany can be contacted via email at Brittany.Sharkey@saskpharm.ca

[Learn more](#)



Continuing Education

CATIE is hosting an online information session about COVID-19 vaccines for people with HIV or hepatitis C and their service providers. This event will provide answers to questions commonly. [more](#)

[Learn more](#)



COVID-19 Updates

Check SSCP'ssa COVID page regularly for important updates.

[Learn more](#)

The profession of pharmacy is continually evolving. Information in past publications may likely be outdated, and it is vital and incumbent on pharmacy professionals to seek out the most updated version of SSCP policies, guidelines and [bylaws](#) in more [recent publications](#), the [news section](#), and the [Reference Manual](#).

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