

Immunization

Immunizations are an additional competency for Licensed Practical Nurses. This means that the Licensed Practical Nurse must obtain additional immunization education (post-graduate or employer based) beyond the basic LPN program.

Licensed Practical Nurses provide immunizations in a variety of settings including hospitals, long term care centers, community agencies, clinics and clients' homes.

It is within the scope of practice of the LPN with additional education in immunizations to administer immunizations to clients over the age of five. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers (under the age of five) must be referred to a Public Health Agency.

Sections 20 and 21 of the SALPN Regulatory Bylaws provide as follows:

20. All members shall ensure that they work within their educational preparation, level of competence and scope of practice and comply with the standards of practice set out in the *Standards of Practice for Licensed Practical Nurses* approved and adopted by Canadian regulatory agencies as of April 1, 2013.

21. All members shall conduct themselves in an honorable and ethical manner, upholding the values of truth, honesty, and trustworthiness, and shall observe the standards of conduct set out in the *Code of Ethics for Licensed Practical Nurses in Canada* approved and adopted by Canadian Regulatory Agencies as of April 1, 2013.

Licensed Practical Nurses who administer immunizations must first participate in education that contains:

- concept of immunity and principles of communicable disease prevention and control
- anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology of communicable diseases
- action, purpose, uses and nature of common immunizing/biological agents
- factors which affect the action of immunizing/biological agents
- side effects, adverse effects, and contraindications of common immunizing/biological agents and how to report appropriately
- legal responsibilities, policy, procedure, and scope of practice in the preparation and administration of immunizing/biological agents
- how to maintain the cold chain in the transportation and storage of immunizing/biological agents
- how to review pertinent health information of client prior to immunization
- how to document assessment and nursing actions related to risk factors
- how to perform critical elements to ensure safety in preparation and administration of immunizing/biological agent
- documentation for immunizing/biological agent administration and client's response
- client, family or guardian informed consent

LPNs administering vaccinations are responsible to:

- demonstrate knowledge and ability to provide immunizations in accordance with professional legislation, regulation, standards and guidelines.
- ensure that physician orders / medical directives, appropriate employer/workplace policies and procedures and informed consents are in place.
- assess the health status of clients before, during, and after the administration of immunizations and predict and manage any adverse effects. Based upon your assessment; at risk individuals should not be immunized in a facility/general immunization clinic but should be referred to a supporting agency, such as public health.
- ensure they have received appropriate education as outlined in this document and perform ongoing assessment of their own continuing learning needs and competence.

Adverse Client Response

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening event that requires vigilance on the part of the healthcare practitioner who needs to recognize the condition quickly and initiate early treatment. As part of the immunization process, LPNs must demonstrate knowledge and ability to recognize and participate in the management of anaphylaxis in accordance with agency policy. In the event of an adverse client response, LPNs implement emergency protocols and complete forms according to employer/agency policies and procedures.

Determining Appropriate Practice Context

LPNs must ensure that adequate references, resources and practice supports are readily available prior to the administration of an immunization. LPNs are expected to use professional judgment as they prepare to immunize a client. LPNs meet their standards of practice and code of ethics by declining to perform immunizations when safe and ethical client care is not supported (for example: LPNs should decline providing immunizations to family or friends outside of the process as described within this practice guideline).

LPNs are expected to consider the immunization within the client's broader health care needs and ongoing health challenges. They should recognize when the presence of other health issues or client circumstances (for example: clients who have a history of immunization reactions or clients living in areas where access to emergency health services is more difficult), increases the risk for a negative health outcome. The more risk associated with the immunization, the more likely the LPN should consult, collaborate, or refer the client to an appropriate care provider before administering the immunization.

References

- The Licensed Practical Nurses Act, 2000, of the Statutes of Saskatchewan Queens Printer, 2000*
- The Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, Competency Profile for LPNs, 3rd. Ed., 2017*
- Saskatchewan Immunization Manual, Saskatchewan Health, 2012*
- College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia, Immunization Practice Guideline, 2017*
- College of Nurses of Ontario, Decisions About Procedures and Authority Practice Standard, 2017*