

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PHARMACY BOARD

Guidelines for Pharmacy Practice



The Sale of Dimenhydrinate in Community Pharmacies

Approved by the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board November 28, 2004
Updated March 6, 2007

Background:

Under the Drug Schedules approved by the Minister of Health and Community Services pursuant to section 45 of the *Pharmacy Regulations, 1998*, dimenhydrinate is classified as Schedule III. *"Schedule III drugs may present risks to certain populations in self-selection and although available without a prescription, these drugs are to be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy which is operated under the direct supervision of the pharmacist."*

While evidence of abuse of dimenhydrinate does not appear to be well documented in this province, there are periodic instances of hospitalization of patients who have overdosed on dimenhydrinate. There are also numerous anecdotal reports from pharmacists of evidence of abuse of dimenhydrinate for its mood altering properties.

An attempt to balance the appropriate availability of this drug for self-medication with the responsibility to prevent or reduce the incidence of misuse was reflected in a policy adopted by the Council of the NPhA on December 6, 1992. The 1992 policy included recognition that package size likely plays a role in abuse of dimenhydrinate. The updated policy below re-affirms the 1992 policy of Council and further clarifies aspects of that policy.

Updated Policy:

- 1) Dimenhydrinate, as a Schedule III drug, can be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy. However, pharmacists should monitor the sales of dimenhydrinate from their pharmacy.
- 2) If pharmacists detect evidence of misuse or abuse of dimenhydrinate from their pharmacy they should voluntarily restrict that drug to Schedule II status (i.e. no patient self-selection, mandatory direct pharmacist involvement in the sale).
- 3) Pharmacists must not stock dimenhydrinate in the self-selection area of the pharmacy in package sizes larger than 30 units, or 100ml for liquid dosage forms.
- 4) Quantities of dimenhydrinate larger than 30 units or 100ml of liquid dosage form must only be dispensed pursuant to a prescription, or pursuant to the authorization of a pharmacist directly involved in the sale, which is documented in the patient drug profile of the patient to whom the drug is dispensed.
- 5) Pharmacists are encouraged to document instances of known abuse of dimenhydrinate in their area and report those instances to the NLPB. Similarly, the NLPB will request that the provincial Poison Control Centre record instances of dimenhydrinate overdoses and abuse.