



College of Pharmacists of Manitoba

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Guidance on the Administration of Sublocade by a Pharmacist

Introduction

Sublocade (buprenorphine extended-release injection) is a partial opioid agonist for the management of moderate to severe opioid use disorder that must be administered subcutaneously in the abdominal region by a trained health care professional. A pharmacist may administer this drug if they meet the requirements outlined below and are authorized to administer the injection by the Sublocade prescriber.

Ideally, the first two Sublocade injections should be administered by the approved prescriber or a nurse who works in the clinic the patient attends for their opioid agonist therapy (OAT) care. A pharmacist can administer further doses as authorized by the Sublocade prescriber. A pharmacist should only administer the first dose of Sublocade if the prescriber or a nurse is not able to administer the medication in a timely manner and the pharmacist is comfortable and competent in doing so. Prescriber obligations in terms of counselling, ruling out pregnancy, ensuring reliable fertility control, informed consent and all standards of care would still apply.

Communication and collaboration between the pharmacist and prescriber throughout the patient's treatment are of utmost importance to ensure that the patient receives safe and optimal care. Please see the following for further information on the expectations and requirements of the pharmacist and the prescriber.

Expectations of the Pharmacist

Section 18 of the Pharmaceutical Regulation states that a member may only engage in aspects of pharmacy practice that he or she has the requisite knowledge, skill and judgement to provide or perform and that are appropriate for his or her area of practice. Pharmacists who hold current authorization from the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (CPhM) may administer a drug or vaccine by an advanced method, but only if the pharmacist is comfortable, knowledgeable and competent in order to administer the injection. The pharmacist must also have the ability to appropriately handle any adverse reactions that may occur due to the administration.

Training Requirements

At a minimum, pharmacists who want to administer Sublocade, in addition to holding certification of authorization to administer drugs and vaccines by injection from CPhM, along with maintaining the required CPR/First Aid certification, must complete the following training:

1. Sublocade Certification
Each pharmacist wanting to administer Sublocade must successfully complete the non-accredited certification program, which can be found here: www.sublocadecertification.ca.
2. Sublocade product monograph
The product monograph must be reviewed and can be found here <https://health-products.canada.ca/dpd-bdpp/index-eng.jsp>.
3. Approved opioid agonist therapy (OAT) training program
A good understanding of OAT is imperative. The pharmacist must have completed one of the recognized OAT training programs for dispensing buprenorphine-naloxone (different from injectable buprenorphine) as listed in the Opioid Agonist Therapy Guidelines for Manitoba Pharmacists. These guidelines must be reviewed in detail.

It is also strongly recommended that pharmacists participate in the following:

- Sublocade Webinar
Indivior (the manufacturer of Sublocade) offers non-accredited live webinars on the administration of the injection. The pharmacist should contact the representative, Anna Magnan, by email Anna.Magnan@indivior.com for scheduling and to register.

Pharmacists may wish to seek additional training/shadowing from a prescriber or health care provider who has experience administering Sublocade.

Pharmacy managers must ensure that all pharmacists, including new or casual staff, are aware of the requirements around administration of Sublocade. Information must be included in the pharmacy policy and procedures manual.

Additional Requirements

- Pharmacists, when administering Sublocade, must meet all the requirements outlined in the Practice Direction, Standard of Practice # 5: Administration of Drugs including Vaccines. Although the prescriber is responsible for obtaining the patient's consent to start treatment with Sublocade, the pharmacist must obtain consent from the patient or from the person authorized to consent on the patient's behalf to administer the drug.
- It is recommended that Sublocade be administered to patients in the supine position. In addition to the site requirements listed in the Practice Direction, to ensure appropriate administration, a pharmacist must only administer the injection where the patient is able to lie down, face up. A private area with an exam table is required.
- To ensure that the patient has been assessed and has received the appropriate follow up from the prescriber, a pharmacist must receive authorization from the prescriber in order to administer the medication. The pharmacist must also notify the prescriber when the medication has been administered or if a patient misses their injection.

- The pharmacist is responsible for ensuring that the medication can be safely administered and must do their own assessment of the patient that includes but is not limited to:
 - Verifying the identity of the patient and requesting a photo ID if necessary.
 - Checking the patient's local and DPIN history for other medications that may interact or be of concern when used concomitantly.
 - Ensure that the timing of the injection is appropriate. This may require additional collaboration with other health care professionals, especially if there has been a transfer of care.
 - Assessing the patient for intoxication or co-ingestion of alcohol, opioids, benzodiazepines, or other sedating or mood-altering drugs.
 - It is the prescriber's responsibility to ensure that a female patient who is of reproductive age has been started on a reliable and effective form of birth control (such as an IUD or Depo Provera) prior to receiving a Sublocade injection. The pharmacist, however, must also confirm that the patient is prescribed and adherent to the schedule of a reliable and effective form of birth control since the Sublocade injection contains a known teratogenic compound.
- The pharmacist must counsel the patient on the medication. More information can be found in the [Practice Direction on Patient Counselling](#).

Expectations of the Prescriber

- Physicians must hold a current, active buprenorphine/naloxone prescribing approval from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba to prescribe Sublocade.
- RN (Nurse Practitioners) must hold current, active buprenorphine/naloxone prescribing authority from the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba to prescribe Sublocade.
- Sublocade Certification: Approved prescribers wanting to prescribe and administer Sublocade must complete the non-accredited certification program, which can be found here: www.sublocadecertification.ca. This is a Health Canada requirement.
- The certificate generated by the above-mentioned certification program must be faxed to the pharmacy along with the M3P prescription for Sublocade when the prescriber first orders Sublocade from a particular pharmacy.
- The prescriber must ensure they meet all requirements associated with prescribing and administering Sublocade, as outlined in the [CPSM Recommended Practice Manual for the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder with Buprenorphine/naloxone](#).
- Prescribers must actively collaborate and communicate with pharmacists when circumstances indicate that Sublocade administration by a pharmacist would facilitate access to care for the patient and support the patient's ability to participate in their care plan.
- Prescribers must ensure that a female patient who is of reproductive age has been started on a reliable form of birth control (such as an IUD or Depo Provera) prior to receiving a Sublocade injection.

Additional Resources

British Columbia Centre on Substance Use

Webinars on Sublocade

<https://www.bccsu.ca/blog/event/webinars-sublocade/>

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