

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
PHARMACY BOARD

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Member Organization of the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA)

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Policy Regarding the Sale of Dimenhydrinate and Diphenhydramine

Background:

Under the Drug Schedules approved by the Minister of Health dimenhydrinate and diphenhydramine are 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 and diphenhydramine does not appear to be well documented in this province, there are periodic instances of hospitalization of patients who have overdosed on both products. There are also numerous anecdotal reports from pharmacists of evidence of abuse of dimenhydrinate and diphenhydramine for its mood altering properties.

This policy is an attempt to balance the appropriate availability of these drugs for self-medication with the responsibility to prevent or reduce the incidence of misuse. The policy also recognizes that package size likely plays a role in the abuse of dimenhydrinate and diphenhydramine.

Policy:

- 1) Dimenhydrinate and diphenhydramine, as Schedule III drugs, can be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy. However, pharmacists should monitor the sales of dimenhydrinate and diphenhydramine from their pharmacy.
- 2) If pharmacists detect evidence of misuse or abuse of dimenhydrinate or diphenhydramine 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 or diphenhydramine 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 or diphenhydramine 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 or diphenhdramine in their area and report those instances to the PEI Pharmacy Board. Similarly, the Board will request that the Poison Control Centre record instances of dimenhydrinate or diphenhydramine overdoses and abuse.