

Scope of Practice Explanatory Statement

Naturopathic Medicine

April 1, 2026



This Scope of Practice Explanatory Statement provides supplemental guidance to the naturopathic medicine scope of practice statement under the *Health Professions and Occupations Act* (HPOA) regulation. It is designed to help licensees understand the limits, conditions, and out of scope activities that shape which diagnostic, therapeutic, procedural, and prescriptive activities are permitted to support consistent, safe, and lawful practice. It consists of two parts:

1. Scope of Practice Statement under the *Complementary Health Professionals Regulation*
2. Explanatory Statement:
 - a. Restricted Activities
 - b. Limits and Conditions
 - c. Out of Scope Activities

Scope of Practice Statement

Scope of practice statements in regulation set out broadly what each regulated health professional may do. These statements are not exhaustive lists of every service the profession may provide, nor do they exclude other regulated professions or unregulated persons from providing services that fall within a particular profession's scope of practice. Some aspects of the scope of practice of a regulated health professional may overlap or be shared with those of another regulated health profession. Restricted activities, on the other hand, are defined higher-risk activities only allowed to be performed by authorized professionals or persons who have been appropriately delegated the activity.

Under the [Professional Standard: Scope of Practice](#), licensees must provide safe and competent care, maintain current knowledge and skills, and practice only within their individual and professional scope. Licensees are also responsible for ensuring they do not provide false or misleading information to patients or the public, and that their activities align with the limits and conditions established in legislation and regulation.



Complementary Health Professionals Regulation

Scope of practice for naturopathic medicine

16 (1) *The following types of health services, provided primarily for the purposes set out in subsection (2), constitute the scope of practice for naturopathic medicine:*

- (a)** *assessing the health status of patients for the purpose of providing the health services referred to in paragraph (b);*
- (b)** *preventing, treating and managing physical and mental diseases, disorders and conditions with a focus on naturopathic techniques, therapies and therapeutics;*
- (c)** *advising on physical and mental health*

(2) *The primary purposes for providing health services in the practice of naturopathic medicine are the following:*

- (a)** *to promote, maintain and restore physical and mental health;*
- (b)** *to stimulate and support healing processes;*
- (c)** *to relieve pain.*

Limits and conditions

17 (1) *A naturopath who performs surgery in the course of providing health services may perform minor surgery only.*

(2) *For the purposes of subsection (1), “minor surgery” means a surgical procedure that*

- (a)** *is performed on a superficial anatomical structure,*
- (b)** *is performed for a diagnostic or therapeutic purpose,*
- (c)** *does not involve sedation, general anaesthesia or respiratory assistance, and*
- (d)** *does not present a material risk to life.*



Explanatory Statement

Restricted Activities

The new regulations under the HPOA do not limit or reduce any profession's existing scope of practice they had under the *Health Professions Act*. This includes the continued authorization to perform the following restricted activities:

Diagnosis

(a) *diagnose a disease, disorder or condition within the licensees authorized scope of practice*

Drugs

If certified:

A certified naturopath may prescribe, compound, dispense or administer the following:

(i) *a Schedule I drug that is not listed in the Appendix of the regulation and in line with the Clinical Practice Standard: Naturopathic Medicine Prescribing, Compounding and Dispensing Drugs;*

(ii) *a Schedule II drug*

Imaging

(b) *apply X-rays for diagnostic or imaging purposes*

(c) *issue an authorization to apply ultrasound for diagnostic or imaging purposes*

(d) *issue an authorization to apply X-rays for diagnostic or imaging purposes*

(e) *apply ultrasound for diagnostic or imaging purposes*



Injections

- (f) administer by injection a substance or Schedule III drug*
- (g) administer by inhalation a substance or Schedule III drug*
- (h) administer by irrigation a substance or Schedule III drug*
- (i) administer by enteral instillation a substance or Schedule III drug*
- (j) administer by parenteral instillation a substance or Schedule III drug;*

Procedures

- (k) conduct allergy testing and treatment.*
- (l) insert an instrument, device or finger into:*
 - the external ear canal*
 - beyond the point in the nasal passages where they normally narrow*
 - beyond the opening of the urethra*
 - beyond the labia majora*
 - beyond the anal verge*
 - an artificial opening into the body*
- (m) apply electricity for the purpose of destroying tissue*
- (n) perform a procedure on tissue below the dermis*
- (o) perform a procedure on tissue below the surface of a mucous membrane;*
- (p) perform venipuncture;*
- (q) move a joint of the spine beyond the limits the body can voluntarily achieve but within the anatomical range of motion using a high velocity, low amplitude thrust*
- (r) insert a substance that is under pressure into the external ear canal*

Therapeutic Diet

- (s) design a therapeutic diet*
- (t) compound a therapeutic diet that is administered by enteral instillation or parenteral instillation*
- (u) dispense a therapeutic diet*



Limits and Conditions

The following section outlines the limits and conditions that apply to the practice of naturopathic medicine in BC.

Acupuncture

Licensees intending to perform acupuncture must first complete additional training as outlined in the Guidance Additional Training for Previously Certified Practice Areas: Naturopathic Medicine.

Imaging

Ultrasound

May be used for information purposes only within a licensee's office.

Diagnostic ultrasound testing and interpretation of results ***must be performed under the auspices of a radiologist.***

Injection Based Procedures

Licensees intending to perform injection based procedures must first complete additional training as outlined in the Guidance: Additional Training for Previously Certified Practice Areas.

- Devices used for injection therapies must have an **Active Medical Device Licence** from Health Canada.
- Licensees must verify status via the **Medical Devices Active Licence Listing**
- Licensees may access peripherally inserted central catheters (PICCs) and Ports only if they have completed additional training.



Laser Therapies

All laser devices must be **Health Canada approved**.

Occupational Health and Safety Requirements

Licensees using Class 3B or 4 lasers must comply with:

- **CSA Z386 – Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care**
- **ANSI Z136.3 – Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care**
- **WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation Part 7, Division 3 – Radiation Exposure**

A qualified **Laser Safety Officer (LSO)** must be designated and properly trained in all relevant settings.

Medical Devices

Licensees inserting or removing Intrauterine Devices (IUDs) must:

- have an ultrasound on site, or have made arrangements to refer any IUD patients to an ultrasound facility, for purposes of confirmation of IUD placement and the assessment of complications that may arise
- have an autoclave on site to properly sterilize instruments or will be using single use IUD insertion kits
- perform only when frequency to maintain currency and competence is sufficient.
- use only Health Canada approved IUDs



Phlebotomy

Licensees may perform phlebotomy for the collection of blood samples for laboratory testing and for therapeutic purposes.

Out of Scope Activities

The following section outlines the out of scope activities that apply to the practice of naturopathic medicine in BC.

Imaging

Licensees are not authorized to order CT (CAT) scans or MRIs.

Injection Based Procedures

The following injections are out of scope:

- i.** stromal Vascular Fraction (SVF) injections
- ii.** bone marrow injections
- iii.** stellate ganglion blocks
- iv.** intra vaginal injections (exception is providing paracervical block using local anesthetic for insertion and removal of IUD)
- v.** intra cavernous injections
- vi.** injection of botulinum toxin into **intra ocular muscles**
- vii.** injection of dermal fillers into the **genitalia**
- viii.** administering an immunization to a child under five (5) years old



Laser Therapies

Lasers **must not** be used for cutting or destroying tissue, including:

- i.** tumor removal (e.g., CO₂, Nd:YAG lasers)
- ii.** polyp removal (e.g., Argon laser)
- iii.** photodynamic therapy
- iv.** interstitial thermotherapy
- v.** wart removal
- vi.** treatment of periodontal disease

Medical Devices

- Licensees are not authorized to write a prescription for CPAP, or for a trial for CPAP.
- Licensees must not insert PICCS or Ports.

Minor Surgery

Licensees must **not** perform:

- i.** fistulotomies
- ii.** fistulectomies
- iii.** any cutting of tissue beyond the anal verge or involving deeper anatomical structures
- iv.** vasectomy
- v.** circumcision
- vi.** penile frenulectomy



Therapeutic Diet

Licensees may **not** administer a therapeutic diet by enteral instillation or parenteral installation.

Restrictions on Advertising

Compounded Products & Aesthetic Practices

According to the Policy on Manufacturing and Compounding Drug Products in Canada (POL-0051), advertising compounded products to the public by licensees is not permitted.

This includes IV vitamin therapies and Platelet Rich Plasma therapies.

Licensees are permitted to advertise that they offer IV therapy, but they are not permitted to advertise specific IV recipes/compounded products or advertise IV therapy in relation to the treatment of specific conditions.

Regarding aesthetic products such as Botox, licensees are permitted to advertise the brand name, generic name and common name of the product, and its price per given quantity of the product, but are not permitted to advertise these products in relation to the treatment of specific conditions.

Immunization

Licensees must not advertise or promote “alternatives” to vaccination including, but not limited to, terms such as:

- i.** “flu shot alternative”
- ii.** “natural flu shot”
- iii.** “homeopathic vaccination”
- iv.** “natural immunization”