



New Brunswick College of Pharmacists Ordre des pharmaciens du Nouveau-Brunswick

Frequently asked questions: Veterinary Prescribing and Dispensing

According to the *New Brunswick Pharmacy Act, 2014*, a prescription is defined as “*direction given by a prescriber directing that a drug, device, or treatment specified in the direction be dispensed for the person named, or **animal** described...*”

Q1: Can pharmacists dispense veterinary medicines?

Yes. Health Canada recognizes that both pharmacists and licensed veterinarians may dispense **veterinary-specific medicines**. While pharmacists may dispense or compound medications for animals, they must first assess whether they have the skills and knowledge to incorporate this into their practice. As with dispensing a new medication for a human, additional education may be required to ensure required tasks as part of prescribing are provided safely and in the best interest of the animal patient. Pharmacists in many community practice settings currently dispense human prescription medications for use in animal patients. **Expanding to include the dispensing of veterinary-specific medications would represent a new area of practice for most pharmacists.**

Q2: Can pharmacists order veterinary drugs from wholesalers?

Yes. Provided the company has a Drug Establishment License (DEL) from Health Canada and is a registered wholesaler with the New Brunswick College of Pharmacists (refer to Regulations 15.4 and 17.4(3)).

The New Brunswick College of Veterinary Medicine (NBVMA) has provided a list of medications to their registrants that may only be dispensed by veterinarians. Veterinarians may not provide a prescription to an animal’s owner to be filled at a community pharmacy for medication on this list. This list is contained within the NBVMA member portal. Pharmacy professionals have been permitted access to this list by accessing the NBVMA website, under “licensed professionals” then “College of Pharmacists”. For the password, please refer to the April 16, 2026 email from the College or send a request to info@nbpharmacists.ca

Q3: Can pharmacists prescribe for animal patients?

There is nothing in the *NB Pharmacy Act, 2014* or Regulations that prohibits pharmacists from prescribing for animal patients. However, the provision of care to animals requires additional training and knowledge.

Pharmacists must adhere to the same practice standards they would for human patients, including conducting a **patient assessment**. Pharmacists have a responsibility to acknowledge and act on their own self-assessment for this area of practice, and recognize when they lack sufficient competency to provide services for an animal patient.

Compared with human patients, differences in the anatomy and physiology of animals can result in differences in a drug's pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic properties. Species-specific toxicities must also be considered.

In certain circumstances, such as an emergency, it may be appropriate for a pharmacist to prescribe for an animal patient provided they possess the competency to do so safely, and it is in the animal patient's best interest to do so. Other pharmacist prescribing activities common for human patients, such as adapting prescriptions, may require additional expertise as well as consultation and/or communication with a veterinarian. For example, when adapting a prescription to substitute a liquid formulation for a canine patient, xylitol content must be carefully considered, as it is toxic to dogs. **Notification of the primary care provider (in this case, a veterinarian) is to occur per Regulation 21.15, for any prescribing activity that is clinically significant.**

Pharmacists are required to practice within their established competencies when providing care to all patients, and this includes animals. Before engaging in a new area of practice, they must assess their existing skills and knowledge and address any identified gaps prior to proceeding.