

Nurse Initiated Medication

Medications should be administered according to this protocol by hospital-accredited staff only. The protocol includes sufficient detail on the medication for the direction and information of nursing staff.

This protocol has been updated to align with the Children's Dosing Companion. Australian Medicine Handbook (2023)

No preparation containing Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 drugs may be included in this Nurse Initiated Protocols

Nurse initiated medications are not administered on an **ongoing** basis without a medical review.

If, on review, the medication is to continue, it must be prescribed by a medical officer or nurse practitioner.

Drug Name: Paracetamol

**Valid until:
31st March 2027**

Approved by Drug Committee on:

Developed by:

Team Leader: Maricel Mariano

Department: Emergency

Acting Nurse Educator

Team Members:

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2. Pamela Bold, Acting Nurse Manager ED
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4. Nicole Johnston, Transitional NP ED
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Description of the drug:

- Paracetamol is commonly used within paediatric emergency departments for safe and effective pain relief of mild-moderate pain or management of fever.
- No anti-inflammatory activity.
- Food intake delays absorption (maximum absorption is in the fasting state).
- Metabolised in the liver.

Expected outcomes:

- Mild – Moderate pain relief and/or
- Fever management

Side effects:

- Transient nausea
- Rash
- Gastric irritation
- Liver toxicity, particularly in children with diminished caloric intake, inadvertent overdose or in children at risk.

Dosage range:

Accredited Emergency Department nurses can only administer the following doses of paracetamol where no contraindications exist.

NB: Be aware, the dose of paracetamol may need adjusting for obese children. The dose should be calculated according to ideal body weight.

1 month – 18 years :

Oral 15 mg/kg (up to 1 g) every 4–6 hours

OR

Rectal 15–20 mg/kg (up to 1 g) every 6 hours; maximum 60 mg/kg (not to exceed 4 g) daily.

Do not administer a dose in children who have had an oral dose within the past 4 hours **OR** rectal dose within the past 6 hours

Strength (where applicable):

- Oral: 48 mg/mL (240 mg/5mL) suspension, 500 mg tablets
- Rectal: 125mg, 250mg and 500mg suppositories

Route of administration:

- Oral
- Rectal–suppositories only– oral medication is **NOT** to be given rectally.
 - Round off the dose to appropriate size of the suppository as suppository cannot be cut to be used for part dosing.
 - Suppositories should not be used in neutropenic patients or patients who are severely immunocompromised.

NB: this guideline does not apply to intravenous paracetamol

Indications/patient eligibility criteria:

- **Analgesia**
 - Post-operative pain
 - Pre-operative/procedural pain
 - Mild – Moderate pain (Pain Score 1 – 7)
- **Antipyretic** – temperature >38°C

Contraindications (including possible interaction with other drug therapy):

- Children <1 month of age (or <1month of age, corrected for prematurity)
- Children who have had an oral dose within the past 4 hours OR rectal dose within the past 6 hours
- Children with acute renal or hepatic failure
- Children with history of renal or hepatic failure
- Oncology, neutropenic or immunocompromised patients
- Mild fever <38°C
- Children with gastroenteritis without fever
- Not to be used as a sedative (Paracetamol is not a sedative)

Restrictions on categories of staff who may administer the medication and/nursing accreditation criteria, including completion of current nursing education package where applicable:

- **Registered** nurses employed by CHW
- **GradStart Registered** nurses after the first 6 months of employment

Any other information deemed necessary:

- N/A

Process for documentation:

- The RN must prescribe the dose as per the NSW Health [PD2022_032 Medication Handling](#) in NSW Health Public Facilities on the Paediatric National Inpatient Medication Chart (PNIMC) or in the patient's electronic medication administration record (MAR).
- The Registered Nurse must use the Nurse Initiated Medication (NIM) order sentence available in Electronic Medication Management (eMM) and clearly document and sign on the electronic Medication Administration Record (MAR) the date, time and dose given. On PNIMC (if used during downtime), the date, time and dose given should be prescribed in the "Once Only" section of the chart
- The patient's current weight must be recorded in the patients' electronic medical record (eMR). If using the PNIMC the patients' weight must be recorded on it.
- **Documentation** to be kept in clinical area and should be transferred or available to other clinical areas as necessary

Nursing assessment: (all documentation to be kept in clinical area by CNE or NE)

- Nursing **assessment** includes
 - a. Completion of the Nurse Initiated Paracetamol Clinical Competency

Observations

- Documentation of temperature on the Standard Paediatric Observation Chart (SPOC) and/or
- Documentation of pain score on the Standard Paediatric Observation Chart (SPOC)
- Repeat temperature and/or pain score documented in the Standard Paediatric Observation Chart (SPOC) 30 minutes following administration

Expectation of the RN initiating the medication is to:

1. Notify a Medical Officer of the administration as soon as practical
2. Clearly document and sign on the Medication Administration Record (MAR) utilising the Electronic Medication Management (eMM) system the date, time and dose given
3. Utilise the pre-existing "Nurse Initiated Medication" order sentence on the eMM to indicate that paracetamol was prescribed under Nurse Initiated Medication conditions.
4. Select the correct order sentence in eMM appropriate for the route of paracetamol, and confirm the dose is appropriate for the weight of the patient.
5. Medical Officer is to confirm the administration by authorising this order within 24 hours of administration on eMM via Message Centre.
6. Document within EMR.

Time/dose limit that a RN can initiate a Nurse Initiated Medication before consultation with a medical officer

- **No further doses** can be administered without review by a medical officer or nurse practitioner.

References

1. Australian Medicines Handbook – Children's Dosing Companion (2023). <https://childrens.amh.net.au.acs.hcn.com.au/monographs/paracetamol> Access online 15/09/2023
2. Sydney Childrens Hospital Network. (2023) Medication Administration. Practice Guideline.
3. The Children's Hospital at Westmead. (2023) Meds4Kids Dosing Guide. Ideal Body Weight Calculator. [Meds 4 Kids - Dosing Guide \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.meds4kids.com.au/) accessed 8/11/2023
4. NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group 'Paracetamol Use' (2008) <http://www.nswtag.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/paracetamol-use-dec-2008.pdf> accessed 8/11/2023