

Administering Long Acting Buprenorphine Injection (LAIB) by Northern Territory (NT) Pharmacists

This guideline aims to give pharmacists local legislative assurance and core considerations for the administration of the Restricted Schedule 8 (S8) medication Buprenorphine (in the form of a depot injection). The guideline makes reference to the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2012*, and associated Regulations .

This guideline is not intended to provide clinical information of product administration. It is the responsibility of individual pharmacists to access clinical references, use their professional judgment and to maintain the required skills and knowledge relevant to the area of practice.

Regulatory Model

There are no specific requirements or authorisations for pharmacies/pharmacists to participate in the Opioid Pharmacotherapy Program (OPP) in the NT. Pharmacists in the NT may administer medicines dispensed from prescription where they are doing so in accordance with professional standards and in consideration of the intent of the treating doctor and the patient's needs. Pharmacists may also administer scheduled substances on an Administration order issued by an authorised prescriber in accordance with Regulation 13.

It is recommended that pharmacists are familiar with the [National guidelines for medication-assisted treatment of opioid dependence](#), as well as local LAIB clinical guidelines (Appendix B). The S8 prescription requirements relevant to OPP medications can be found on the [Medicines and Poisons website](#).

Pharmacist Competency

Pharmacists offering this service must be satisfied that the medicine can be administered safely to the patient and are responsible for ensuring their own competency in both technical administration and knowledge of the medicine/s to be injected.

The training and professional development, skills and resources below have been deemed as minimum requirements and expectations for pharmacists to inject LAIB in the NT.

Technical skill attainment (injecting)

- Completion of an Immunisation/giving vaccines course which provides the competency of giving intramuscular (IM)/Subcutaneous injections. For example those provided by Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), or The Pharmacy Guild of Australia or approved by Health Education Services Australia (HESA).

Relevant knowledge and recommended courses

- The Australasian College of Pharmacy (ACP)'s [Long-acting injectable buprenorphine \(LAIB\) course](#)
- The PSA's, [Long-acting injectable buprenorphine \(LAIB\) administration by pharmacists](#) online module and [Administering medicines by injection](#) course
- Suggested video demonstration provided by Insight: centre for alcohol and other drug training and workforce development: [Insight - Tips for administering long acting injection buprenorphine](#)
- Current Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid certificate/s

Professional resources

Pharmacists should be familiar with and practice in accordance with the following professional standards, guidelines and/or principles:

- The Pharmacy Board of Australia's, [Code of Conduct](#)
- The PSA's, [Guidelines for pharmacists administering medicines by injection](#)
- PDL Guide to Medicines by Injection

Pharmacists should be supported in consolidating the above knowledge and skills by performing their first LAIB injection under direct supervision. NT Alcohol and Other Drugs Services are the peak service in the NT to provide support and supervision however a relevant LAIB sponsor (eg Indivior or Camurus) trainer, or peer-peer supervision by another experienced LAIB injecting practitioner may be suitable alternatives.

Documentation of all injections is expected under professional standards (in any form that can be reproduced on request). See section on record keeping further on in this document for more details.*Note: If claiming funding for the ODT injection service via the PPA portal, see the [program rules](#) for what is required.

Pharmacy Premises Requirements

Medicines must be administered under a safe, hygienic and professional service model. A pharmacy providing LAIB administration services should do so in an immunisation area/room which has at a minimum been assessed to meet the PS5 Immunisation Standard as set by the Pharmacy Premises Committee (PPC). If a pharmacy wants to provide the LAIB service, but not an immunisation service, the premises will still need to be assessed against the current immunisation service standard.

Naloxone

Pharmacists providing OPP, including LAIB injections, have a higher likelihood of witnessing an opioid overdose or interacting with patients at risk of opioid overdose. It is expected that as part of a pharmacy providing an OPP service, that they are familiar with the Take Home Naloxone (THN) program, and are able to provide naloxone. Pharmacists providing a LAIB service should ensure they are competent in recognising and managing an opioid overdose and pharmacies where this service is provided need to have naloxone for use in an emergency.

The THN Program fully subsidises the cost of naloxone, including dispensing fee, to participating community pharmacies. A prescription is not required. Pharmacies do not need NT Government approval to register and training for Naloxone is provided through the ACP. For more information visit the Department of Health and Aging [website](#)

Other premises considerations

In an effort to align with the accepted standard of clinical environment of an AOD service providing the LAIB administration service, pharmacies may benefit from the additional premise requirements set by the AOD clinic which includes; staff witness present for administration, duress alarms, safe workspace ergonomics and high quality record keeping for easy recall of information.

Consent considerations

- Some pharmacist assistance documents, pre administration form, including a patient consent form, consent considerations and a digital administration form, can be accessed on the PPA's ODT Community Pharmacy Program [website](#).
- For drug administration – pre administration form is digital on the PPA's ODT Community Pharmacy Program [website](#).

Patient safety considerations

Long Acting Injectable Buprenorphine products must never be supplied directly to patients

Adverse effects, drug interaction and drug-condition interactions can be found in the relevant Product Information (PI) and clinical references utilised in your everyday practice. Pharmacists are required to ensure consumers are provided post administration counselling and due care. Any (even minor) adverse events should be managed and reported to the treating clinical team or prescribing doctor.

Pharmacists should consider having in place policies/processes that cover:

- Available emergency response procedures (in a medical emergency or staff safety response).
- Post injection symptoms management (ice packs to injection site common practice prior to Sublocade® injection).
- Safety practices, including those relating to the [Australian Guideline for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare](#).
- Practitioner support services such as [DACAS](#)

Documentation and record keeping

Appropriate documentation of the consultation is important to ensure a complete record of an OPP service provided and to comply with legislative record keeping requirements and professional practice standards. These are separate record keeping requirements to the PPA's ODT Community Pharmacy Program (for funding).

Following pharmacist dispensing and administration of LAIB, the following **must** be recorded:

- The prescription (patient's name and address, date of prescribing, name of prescriber, drug name/strength/dose, prescribed date of intended administration).
- Actual date of administration
- Expiry and Batch number of product used

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- Site of injection
- Signature of receiving patient following administration
- Signature of administering pharmacist
- Name and signature of staff witness if present during administration.- if applicable

The above details should be recorded in the form of a dosing sheet / log, in addition to a prescription copy. The NT Health template for Buprenorphine depot administration log can be accessed by contacting Top End Alcohol and Other Drug Services.

Pharmacists must maintain their S8 drug register as per regular practice following dispensing of prescription.

Pharmacists who have undergone minimum training/competency requirements listed above and premises that have met PPC requirements for providing the LAIB service should maintain appropriate records of their competencies and are expected to provide these upon request of referring treating clinicians.

Other Resources

Resources such as equipment, policies, procedures and protocols, trained personnel, practice agreements (where relevant) and indemnity insurance are all required to conduct the LAIB administration service.

For examples of pre-administration checklist and an anaphylaxis response kit, review the [PSA's, Guidelines for pharmacists administering medicines by injection](#).

Clinical Support and Collaboration Services:

Top End Alcohol and other Drug Services Building 9 Royal Darwin Hospital Rocklands Drive Tiwi NT 0810	Ph. 08 8922 8399 After hours: 0429 571 111 (for pharmacist use only. Not to be given to clients).
Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Central Australia 2 Stuart Terrace The Gap NT 0870	Ph. 08 8951 7580
Drug and Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service (DACAS) https://www.dacas.org.au	Ph. 1800 111 092 The DACAS is a 24/7 specialist telephone consultancy service that is free of charge for health and welfare professionals.
NT Mental Health Line (24 hours)	Ph. 1800 682 288

Acronyms

Acronyms	Full form
ACP	Australasian College of Pharmacy
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
DACAS	Drug and Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service
LAIB	Long Acting Injection Buprenorphine
NT	Northern Territory
ODT	Opioid Dependence Treatment – used to refer to the nationally funded program of medicines and pharmacy allowances paid to deliver OST
OPP	Opioid Pharmacotherapy Program – the program operated in the NT
OST	Opioid Substitution Treatment
PI	Product Information
PPA	Pharmacy Programs Administrator
PPC	Pharmacy Premises Committee
PSA	Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
THN	Take Home Naloxone

References:

1. NT Health Guideline: Long Acting Injectable Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Dependence: [Long Acting Injectable Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Dependence NT Health Guideline.docx](#)
2. [National guidelines for medication-assisted treatment of opioid dependence | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
3. NT Code of Practice Schedule 8 Substances - Volume 2 Storage & Transportation
4. PI for Buvidal (weekly vs monthly): [TGA eBS - Product and Consumer Medicine Information](#)
5. PI for Sublocade: [SUBLOCADE \(tga.gov.au\)](#)