
Antacid (aluminium/magnesium or calcium based) SESLHDPR/443
for relief of dyspepsia / nausea in adults
(for example Gaviscon®)

POLICY STATEMENT

The Registered Nurse (RN), Registered Midwife (RM) or Enrolled Nurse (EN) is authorised to instigate nurse/midwife-initiated medication without an authorised prescriber's order under the specific circumstances set out in the **INDICATIONS** section and provided there are no contraindications present.

An Enrolled Nurse (EN) may administer 'nurse-initiated medication' to children greater than 16 years and adults. The EN must confirm verbally with their supervising Registered Nurse prior to the administration that the medication is appropriate and safe for the patient. An EN with a notation because they do not hold board approved qualifications in the administration of medicines is NOT authorised to administer any medication.

It is important for nursing and midwifery staff to remain aware that:

- Minor ailments may be symptoms of other more serious diseases or may be adverse reactions to medication already prescribed
- Nurse-initiated medication may interact with the patient's prescribed medication
- The maximum daily recommended dose of the medication must not be exceeded¹

The administering nurse/midwife must record the administration on an approved paper or electronic medication chart, clearly indicating that the medicine was nurse initiated.

If the patient continues to require the medication (i.e., more than two doses in 24 hours) then an authorised prescriber or Nurse Practitioner must be consulted and a regular or PRN order obtained.

A change in the patient's condition such as newly occurring or increasing severity of symptoms must be reported to the authorised prescriber or Nurse Practitioner and investigated.

INDICATIONS

Relief of symptoms associated with dyspepsia, indigestion, heartburn, gastric upset, peptic ulcer pain and other conditions associated with gastric hyperacidity in adults

CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Renal impairment
- Alzheimer's disease (aluminium containing antacids are not recommended)

PRECAUTIONS

- Constipation - exacerbated by antacids containing aluminium
- Diarrhoea - exacerbated by laxative effect of antacids containing magnesium
- Elevated serum magnesium concentration - may cause CNS
- Hypophosphatemia
- Chronic use in the elderly
- Safe to use in pregnancy (Category A)
- Can be safely used in lactation. Avoid high doses or long-term use.

NURSE/MIDWIFE INITIATED MEDICINE PROTOCOL

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HISTORY/ASSESSMENT

Consult medication chart PRIOR to administration of an antacid to assess for possibility of drug interactions. Antacids can reduce the effect of several other oral medicines. The best way to avoid a problem is to separate taking antacids and other medicines by at least two hours.

Don't administer to patients who are NBM unless otherwise instructed by a MO

Avoid use if CrCl <10mL/ minute. Check that patient's magnesium level is not elevated.

PROTOCOL/ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES

Caution: CHECK for allergies and/or contraindications			
Drug	Dose	Route	Frequency
Antacid suspension sodium alginate 500 mg/10 mL + sodium bicarbonate 267 mg/10 mL + calcium carbonate 160 mg/10 mL oral liquid (Gaviscon®)	10 to 20 mL	Oral	ONCE only
Administer at least two hours apart from other medications.			

MONITORING - POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS/INTERACTIONS

Occasionally constipation or diarrhoea have been reported, but usually in association with high doses.

DOCUMENTATION

A record of the administration must be made on the approved paper or electronic medication chart noting that the medication was nurse initiated.

A further record of the medication administered including indication, dose and effect must be included in the patient's health care record.

PRACTICE POINTS

- Most effective if taken one to three hours after meals
- Starts to work within five to 10 minutes
- If adequate relief is not obtained notify the Medical Officer to review the patient.

REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

1. [NSW Health Policy Directive Medication Handling PD2022_032](#)

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2. [Australian Medicines Handbook](#). Combination Antacids. South Australia: Australian Medicines Handbook Pty Ltd, July 2025.

REVISION and APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Version Number	Author and Approval
July 2015	DRAFT	Pharmacy Department, Sydney Eye Hospital
September 2015	1	Approved by SESLHD Drug & QUM Committee
May 2018	DRAFT 2	Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff. Minor wording updates made. References updated.
July 2018	2	Approved by SESLHD Quality Use of Medicines Committee
September 2021	DRAFT 3	Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff.
October 2021	3	Approved by SESLHD Quality Use of Medicines Committee
October 2022	DRAFT 4	NBM amendment proposed.
November 2022	4	Approved by SESLHD Quality Use of Medicines Committee
June 2023	DRAFT 5	NSW Medicines Formulary reviewed. Mylanta removed. Gaviscon added. Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff.
September 2023	5	Approved by SESLHD Drug and Therapeutics Committee
11 September 2025	6	Approved by SESLHD Drug and Therapeutics Committee.