



Practice Question of the Month

June 2009



Clarifying the Difference Between Prescribing & Recommending

Welcome! To enhance communication and education of our members, the College has developed a *Practice Question of the Month* five-minute module series.

The June 2009 module will clarify the Controlled Act of prescribing as outlined in the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.

Please take the time at the end of the module to fill out a short survey. We appreciate your input and value your feedback.

Now let's begin...



True or False: Recommending nutrition supplements to clients is considered prescribing?

☐ A) True

☒ B) False

True or False: Recommending nutrition supplements to clients is considered prescribing?

Please select the most appropriate answer to this practice question and click submit when finished.



ANSWER: FALSE

- Know the difference between recommending and prescribing:
 - Prescribing authorizes the dispensing of a drug that requires a prescription.
 - Recommending nutritional supplements is not prescribing.
 - Within the RD scope of practice to recommend nutritional supplements.

The correct answer is “false.”

To understand the controlled act of prescribing, it is important to distinguish between recommending and prescribing. Prescribing, in the context of the *Regulated Health Professions Act* refers to a written order which authorizes the dispensing of a drug that requires a prescription.

Because most nutritional supplements do not require a prescription, a dietitian who recommends a particular vitamin or mineral supplement, along with a recommended dose, is not prescribing.

It is well within the dietetic scope of practice to complete a nutritional assessment and develop a nutrition care plan for a client which includes a vitamin or mineral supplement.



NAPRA DRUG SCHEDULE

- Consult NAPRA drug schedule database:
 - *Schedule I* – requires a prescription
 - *Schedule II* – behind the counter
 - *Schedule III* – over the counter
 - *Unscheduled* – no supervision required
- Provided supplement is not NAPRA *Schedule I*

RD



To determine whether a drug or nutritional supplement requires a prescription, RDs need to consult the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) national drug schedule database.

Schedule I, II, or III are categories of drugs which specifies the condition of sale.

Schedule I drugs require a prescription for sale and are provided to the public by the pharmacist following the diagnosis and professional intervention of a practitioner.

Schedule II drugs require professional intervention from the pharmacist at the point of sale and possibly referral to a practitioner. While a prescription is not required, the drugs are available only from the pharmacist and must be retained within an area of the pharmacy where there is no public access and no opportunity for patient self-selection (behind the counter).

Schedule III are available without a prescription and are to be sold from the self-selection area of the pharmacy which is operated under the direct supervision of the pharmacist (over the counter).

Unscheduled drugs can be sold without professional supervision, because adequate information is available for the client to make a safe and effective choice.

As long as the supplement is not listed under *Schedule I* (requiring a prescription), a dietitian can make this type of recommendation.



Public Hospital Act

- In-hospital - RDs require a medical directive to order nutritional supplements.
- Outside a public hospital - RDs may recommend nutritional supplements to clients.
- Consult organizational policies.

Even though it is not considered prescribing to order most vitamins & minerals and other nutritional supplements, a regulation under the *Public Hospitals Act* states that only a physician, dentist, midwife or registered nurse in the extended class may write an order for treatment or for a diagnostic procedure. Therefore, RDs would require a medical directive which would authorize them to order nutritional supplements within an inpatient public hospital setting.

Outside of a public hospital and in most outpatient hospital settings, RDs may recommend nutritional supplements to their client as long as the products are not Schedule I drugs. Clients would then purchase the supplements on their own accord.

RDs should also consult organizational policies to ensure there are no facility restrictions for ordering nutritional supplements.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

Summer 2008 *résumé*:

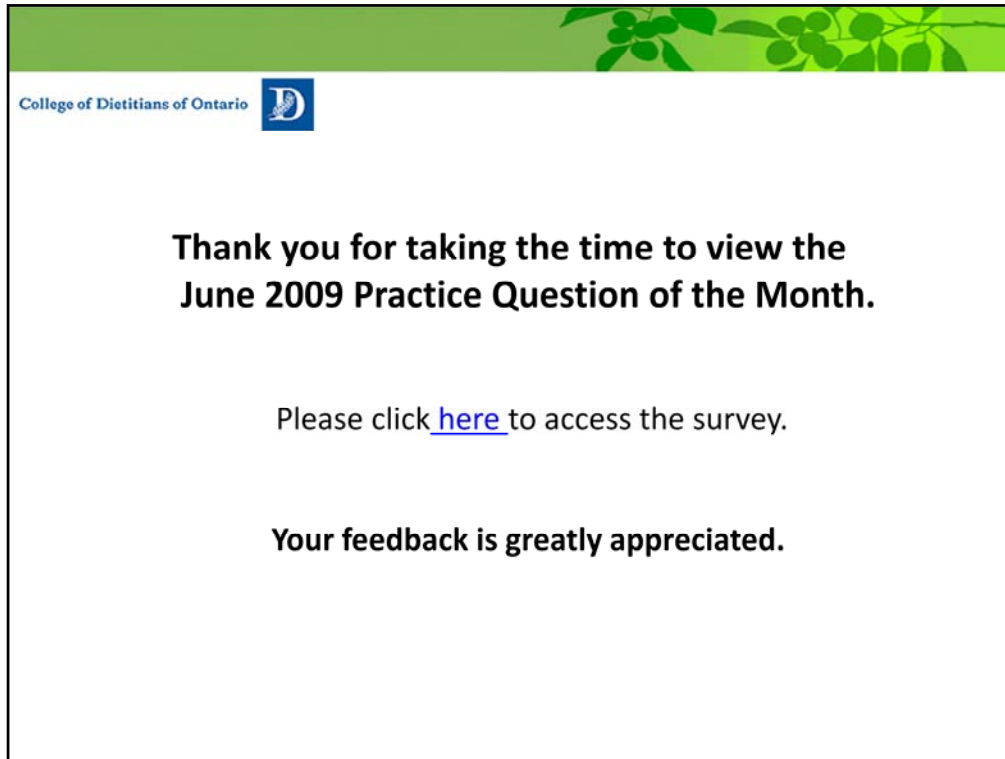
[Vitamins & Minerals & the RD Scope of Practice](#)

NAPRA:

[National Drug Schedule](#)

For more information on Vitamins & Minerals & the RD Scope of Practice, click on the link to access an article from CDO's Summer 2008 issue of *résumé* newsletter.

To determine whether a nutritional supplement is a *Schedule I* drug requiring a prescription, click on the National Drug Schedule link to search the database.



Thank you for taking the time to view the June 2009 Practice Question of the Month on *Clarifying the Difference Between Prescribing & Recommending*.

Please take a moment to click on the link on this slide to fill out a short survey regarding the five-minute e-learning modules.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated.