

## Dietitians' Scope of Practice for Insulin Dose Adjustment

### Position

It is within dietitians' (RDs) scope of practice to provide and/or teach insulin dose adjustment (IDA). RDs must practice IDA within limits of their competence and in compliance with CDBC Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics, current evidence-informed clinical practice guidelines, and, if applicable, Health Authority or health care facility specific policies or guidelines.

### Scope of Practice

Under the Dietitians Regulation (2008), section 4 "Scope of Practice" states: "*A registrant may practice dietetics*".<sup>1</sup> The practice of dietetics is described as: "*The assessment of nutritional needs, design, implementation and evaluation of nutritional care plans and therapeutic diets, the science of food and nutrition and dissemination of information about food and nutrition to attain, maintain and promote the health of individuals, groups and the community*". As a component of diabetes care, in the context of a full assessment of nutritional needs, dietitians assess the carbohydrate content of food and beverage intake and adjust the amounts consumed to achieve the client's blood glucose concentration goals.

Insulin is listed in Schedule 2 of the BC Drug Schedules Regulation<sup>2</sup>. Schedule 2 drugs may be sold by a pharmacist on a non-prescription basis, and must be retained within the Professional Service Area of the pharmacy where there is no public access and no opportunity for patient self-selection. As a Schedule 2 drug, insulin doses can be self-selected and it is within dietitian scope of practice to recommend insulin doses to the client.

RDs competent in IDA adjust insulin doses in response to a range of blood glucose readings as it relates to their assessment of a client's food and beverage intake, physical activity and other health factors to help clients achieve their glycemic targets. IDA is recommended as part of diabetes self-management; it has been shown to improve quality of life and diabetes control by empowering clients to make informed choices<sup>3</sup>.

RDs competent in IDA may teach clients to self-adjust insulin doses if the client has the ability and interest to self-manage IDA. However, not all clients are able to self-adjust insulin doses and for these clients, RDs competent in IDA may adjust the client's insulin doses.

The CDBC's position on IDA is that it is within RDs scope of practice as described below, provided the RD is qualified and competent in IDA and has knowledge of current insulin therapies. Several scenarios of IDA may occur:

#### a. **Client led IDA - RD teaches client to self-manage IDA**

Clients who require insulin dose adjustment are educated on:

- the timing, frequency and technique of obtaining glucometer (blood glucose) readings,
- how to use insulin dose adjustment tools to determine the appropriate amount and timing of insulin, and
- contact information for assistance and support.

Clients educated on insulin dose adjustment may adjust the insulin dose independently or may contact the diabetes outpatient clinic to ask for assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Health Professions Act; Dietitians Regulations. [http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws\\_new/document/ID/freeside/279\\_2008](http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/279_2008); accessed June 2, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act; BC Drug Schedules Regulation. [http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/9\\_98](http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/9_98); accessed June 2, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Self-management Education. 2013 Clinical Practice Guidelines. Canadian Diabetes Association. [http://guidelines.diabetes.ca/app\\_themes/cdacpg/resources/cpg\\_2013\\_full\\_en.pdf](http://guidelines.diabetes.ca/app_themes/cdacpg/resources/cpg_2013_full_en.pdf) (S26-30) accessed May 25, 2016.

**b. Collaborative IDA - client and RD together**

Clients educated on IDA may request assistance to select an adjusted insulin dose.

When a client requests assistance, the RD will request the pertinent blood glucose reading or series of readings from the client and using the insulin dose adjustment tools with the client, the RD will assist the client to determine the appropriate insulin dose.

**c. RD directed IDA**

When a client and RD collaborate on IDA but more assistance is needed, the RD may determine the insulin dose adjustment required and inform the client of the specific amount of insulin needed.

If a client with diabetes has not yet received insulin dose adjustment teaching, or if insulin dose adjustment is to be provided by the diabetes care team, the RD may inform the client of the specific amount of insulin needed, as described above.

***Definitions:***

- ***Insulin Dose Adjustment:*** means to adjust insulin doses in response to a range of blood glucose readings as it relates to the assessment of a client's food and beverage intake, physical activity and other health factors.
- ***Teaching Insulin Dose Adjustment:*** means to educate a client to self-adjust insulin doses in response to a range of blood glucose readings.
- ***Qualified RD:*** means a dietitian who is safe and competent to provide diabetic care. Although not a College requirement, RDs who provide diabetic care are generally Certified Diabetes Educators (CDE)<sup>3</sup>. Health Authorities or health care facilities may require additional evidence of competence, such as the CDE, and/or a verification of competence or passing a competency examination to adjust insulin.