



The College of Naturopaths of Ontario



## Core Competencies



### Introduction

Naturopathic Doctors provide primary and adjunctive health care to people of all ages, focusing on the use of natural therapies to support and stimulate healing processes. Naturopathic Doctors promote health and educate patients about illness prevention and diagnose and treat diseases in a manner consistent with the body of knowledge and standards of practice of the profession.

### Definitions

**Naturopathic Diagnosis:** A diagnosis made by a Naturopathic Doctor and communicated to a patient or patient representative.

**Naturopathic Medicine:** as defined in section 3 of the *Naturopathy Act, 2007* is the practice of naturopathy in the assessment of diseases, disorders and dysfunctions and naturopathic diagnosis and treatment of diseases, disorders and dysfunctions using naturopathic techniques to promote, maintain or restore health.

## Naturopathic Medical Knowledge

### The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

#### 1. Integrates naturopathic philosophy, theory and principles with biomedical sciences in the care of patients and case management.

- Evaluates and integrates clinical knowledge within the context of naturopathic principles and philosophy in clinical practice.
- Formulates naturopathic diagnoses and treatment plans consistent with naturopathic philosophy and principles.

#### 2. Develops, maintains and respects a comprehensive naturopathic medical knowledge base.

- Demonstrates knowledge of the history, philosophy and clinical sciences essential to the practice of Naturopathic Medicine.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the theory and practice of therapeutics including but not limited to botanical medicine, homeopathic medicine, traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, pharmaceuticals, physical medicine, clinical nutrition, and lifestyle counselling.
- Updates knowledge base continuously through the review of relevant research and ongoing continuing education.

#### 3. Performs a health assessment, critically evaluates information and formulates naturopathic diagnoses.

- Gathers information necessary to formulate naturopathic diagnoses.
- Incorporates knowledge of the determinants of health and disease into assessment.

- Understands and is able to interpret results from laboratory tests, physical examinations, and other diagnostic tests.
- Integrates the patient's health profile, including but not limited to health history, physical examination, diagnostic testing and other relevant patient information, with naturopathic principles in formulating a diagnosis.
- Critically evaluates patient-related information in formulating naturopathic diagnoses.
- Integrates new information appropriately into clinical reasoning.
- Evaluates, reflects on and amends diagnoses and treatments based on patient outcomes.

**4. Ensures professional competence through ongoing self-assessment and professional development.**

- Integrates learning into evidence-informed practice.
- Recognizes limitations in knowledge, skill, judgment and scope of practice.
- Engages in ongoing professional development and learning.
- Maintains the skills to identify, appraise and utilize empirical, peer-reviewed research and other information sources.
- Self-assesses professional knowledge and skills regularly.

## Inter and Intra-professional Practice and Collaboration

### The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

**1. Develops and maintains relationships with other regulated health care professionals, and other Naturopathic Doctors, in the care of patients.**

- Demonstrates an understanding of the scope of practice of naturopathic medicine and other regulated health care professions.
- When authorized by the patient, collaborates with other regulated health professionals to support health promotion and illness prevention.
- Utilizes community resources in professional practice.
- Supports, and participates where appropriate, in the mentorship of students and peers.

## Communication

### The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

**1. Communicates effectively.**

- Articulates information clearly and concisely and in a timely manner, listens actively and responds appropriately.
- Collaborates with patients in shared decision-making.
- Provides information regarding diagnoses, treatment options, and opportunities for patient questions.
- Communicates appropriately with patients or their authorized representatives, colleagues, other health professionals, the community, the regulator, and other legal authorities.
- Requests from and provides to other health care professionals relevant patient information when authorized.
- Maintains patient confidentiality and privacy.
- Demonstrates sensitivity and respect for patient identity including but not limited to age, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, social status, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- Ensures that all communications are professional.

## Patient Care and Health Promotion

### The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

#### 1. Exemplifies the principle of doctor as teacher

- Teaches the principles of health promotion and illness prevention including but not limited to sustainable health and lifestyle practices, and the significance of environmental and behavioural factors on health.
- Educates the patient regarding the etiology and development of disease.
- Educates the patient about the contributing factors to disease and dysfunction and the ways in which they impact health.
- Educates the patient about treatment options, their potential risks, benefits, side effects, and likely consequences of not receiving the treatment.

#### 2. Provides safe and effective patient care.

- Provides compassionate, ethical, effective and safe care.
- Utilizes naturopathic therapeutics safely and effectively including but not limited to botanical medicine, homeopathic medicine, traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, pharmaceuticals, physical medicine, clinical nutrition, and lifestyle counselling.
- Identifies, assesses, and communicates, the safety, efficacy, indications, contraindications, actions of and interactions between drugs, substances and therapies being used by or provided to the patient.
- Utilizes best practices and best available evidence, where applicable.
- Creates, implements, monitors and revises individualized treatment plans considering clinical outcomes, best practices, and patient needs.
- Clearly documents all discussions, assessments, diagnoses, treatments and interactions related to patient care.
- Recognizes personal limitations, adheres to scope of practice and makes appropriate referrals to other health care professionals when indicated.
- Maintains professional boundaries and refrains from conflicts of interest.

## Practice Management

### The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

#### 1. Establishes, develops and manages their practice.

- Establishes and maintains an equitable and inclusive practice environment.
- Is knowledgeable of and complies with regulatory requirements related to practice management including but not limited to: maintaining records, fees and billing.
- Is knowledgeable of and complies with health and safety requirements related to practice management including but not limited to: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Occupational Health and Safety Act, etc.
- Maintains appropriate liability insurance.

- Recognizes, discloses and manages any real or perceived conflict of interest.
- Identifies, assesses, develops and applies strategies and solutions to manage risk in clinical practice.
- Ensures all practice-related advertising and social media content is professional and in keeping with the standards of practice of the profession.

## Legislation/Ethics

### The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

#### 1. Complies with all relevant laws and regulations.

- Complies with federal, provincial, and municipal legislation, regulations and bylaws.
- Understands and complies with the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, *Naturopathy Act, 2007* and all College regulations and standards of practice.
- Understands and complies with mandatory reporting requirements to the appropriate body/organization.

#### 2. Demonstrates ethical conduct and integrity in professional practice and personal conduct.

- Practices with integrity and without prejudice.
- Abides by the naturopathic oath.
- Demonstrates accountability for practice decisions.
- Places the protection of the public ahead of self-interest.
- Ensures that all recommendations and actions are in the best interest of the patient.
- Recognizes and addresses ethical issues arising in practice.
- Establishes and maintains appropriate therapeutic relationships and professional boundaries.

## Legislative Framework

Naturopathy Act, 2007

Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991

## Approval

**Original Approval Date:** October 03, 2012

**Latest Amendment Date:** October 01, 2021

### **Disclaimer**

In the event of any inconsistency between this document and any legislation that governs the practice of Naturopathic Doctors, the legislation shall govern.