



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 prevent illness, and diagnose and treat disease in a manner consistent with the body of knowledge and standards of practice for the profession.

The following Core Competencies articulate the knowledge, skill and judgment required of Naturopathic Doctors at entry-to-practice.

Naturopathic Medical Knowledge

The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

1. Integrates naturopathic philosophy, theory and principles with naturopathic medical knowledge in the care of patients and case management including the assessment, diagnostic and treatment phases.

- Evaluates and integrates clinical arts and science knowledge within the context of naturopathic principles and philosophy in clinical practice.
- Formulates 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 and philosophy of Naturopathic Medicine.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the clinical arts and sciences essential to the practice of Naturopathic Medicine.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the theory and practice of therapeutics including botanical medicine, homeopathic medicine, traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, physical medicine, clinical nutrition, and lifestyle counselling.
- Updates knowledge base continuously through the review of relevant research and ongoing continuing education.

3. Conducts an assessment to formulate a diagnosis.

- Gathers information necessary to formulate a diagnosis.
- Incorporates knowledge of the determinants of health and disease into assessment.
- Formulates diagnoses based on a clinical assessment including but not limited to a medical history, physical examination and diagnostic testing.

4. Critically evaluates medical information.

- Understands, respects and incorporates evidence-based medicine¹ in his/her practice.
- Appraises evidence critically to address clinical questions.

- Integrates new information appropriately into clinical reasoning.
- Evaluates and reflects on patient outcomes.

Inter-professional Practice and Collaboration

The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

1. Develops and maintains relationships with other health care professionals in the care of his/her patients.

- Demonstrates an understanding of the scope of practice of other health care professionals.
- Collaborates with others to support health promotion and disease prevention.
- Utilizes community resources in professional practice.
- Collaborates with other health care professionals in the care of his/her patients when necessary.

Communication

The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

1. Communicates effectively.

- Articulates information clearly and concisely and in a timely manner, listens actively and responds appropriately.
- Communicates appropriately with patients or their authorized representatives, colleagues, other health professionals, the community, his/her regulator, and other legal authorities.
- Requests from and provides to other health care professionals relevant patient information.
- Advances naturopathic principles and philosophy in communication with patients, health care professionals and the public.
- Maintains patients confidentiality and privacy.

Patient Care and Health Promotion

The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

1. Exemplifies the principle of doctor as teacher in patient interactions.

- Teaches the principles of healthy living and preventative medicine.
- 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 and their potential risks, benefits, and side effects.

2. Provides safe and effective patient care.

- Provides compassionate, ethical, effective and safe care.
- Utilizes naturopathic therapeutics effectively including botanical medicine, homeopathic medicine, traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture, physical medicine, clinical nutrition and lifestyle counselling.
- Identifies and assesses the actions of and interactions between drugs, substances and therapies being used by or provided to the patient.
- Communicates a diagnosis.
- Creates, implements, monitors and revises effective individualized treatment plans.
- Documents patient care.

- Refers to other health care professionals when indicated.
- Engages patients in establishing a long-term strategy for their personal health.
- Maintains professional boundaries and refrains from conflicts of interest.

3. Promotes the principles and philosophy of Naturopathic Medicine to patients and the community.

- Promotes naturopathic principles and philosophy.
- Promotes sustainable health practices.
- Educates others on the significance of environmental factors on health.
- Promotes a wider acceptance of Naturopathic Medicine in the health care system.

Practice Management

The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

1. Establishes, develops and manages his/her practice.

- Practices in a compassionate, ethical and legal manner.
- Engages in short and long term business planning.
- Organizes and manages systems and resources relevant to practice needs.
- Maintains a safe and secure workplace.
- Manages time effectively.
- Recognizes the importance of establishing and maintaining a personal/professional life balance.

Education and Learning

The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

1. Ensures professional competence through ongoing self-assessment and professional development.

- Integrates learning into practice.
- Recognizes limitations in knowledge, skill, judgment and scope of practice.
- Engages in on-going professional development and learning.
- Understands the significance of research with respect to predicting health outcomes.
- References and employs empirical, literary and information-technology sources.
- Self-assesses professional knowledge and skills regularly.

2. Supports the advancement of Naturopathic Medicine through the development, critical assessment and dissemination of research and information.

- Participates in research activities as appropriate for professional practice.

3. Supports the mentorship of students and Members.

- Participates in mentorship as appropriate.

Legislation/Ethics

The competent Naturopathic Doctor:

1. Complies with all relevant laws and regulation.

- Complies with federal, provincial, and municipal legislation, regulations and bylaws.

• Understands and complies with the <i>Regulated health Professions Act, Naturopathy Act</i> and all College regulations and standards of practice.
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.