

**NZCOM CONSENSUS STATEMENT**  
***Prescribing of drugs unapproved for use in  
maternity care or for the newborn***

*This Consensus statement was ratified at NZCOM AGM 2010*

The New Zealand College of Midwives position is that drugs that are unapproved for use in maternity care or for the newborn should not be promoted or prescribed by a midwife on her own responsibility.

It is recognised that some unapproved drugs are used in the secondary and tertiary hospital setting. These drugs should be prescribed by a doctor following a comprehensive assessment and diagnosis of the woman and with her informed consent. Midwives may then be required to administer unapproved drugs as a delegated responsibility including during an obstetric emergency in the community.

**Rationale:**

- There is universal concern that sufficient information is provided regarding the use of unapproved medications in maternity for women to be able to give informed consent.
- Drugs used in maternity care need to be evidence based and as safe and effective as possible for the treatment of prescribed conditions.
- Midwives scope of practice includes the promotion of evidence based care.
- Prescribing drugs on their own responsibility, that are approved for use during pregnancy, labour, birth and in the postnatal period, is a competency of a practicing midwife.

References

1. Midwives Handbook for Practice- Standards for Practice  
New Zealand College of Midwives (2008)
2. Midwifery Council of New Zealand- Competencies for Entry to the Register of Midwives  
[www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz/main/Competencies](http://www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz/main/Competencies)
3. Unapproved use of medicines. Information for health professional. Medsafe  
[www.medsafe.govt.nz/Profs/RIss/unapp.asp](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/Profs/RIss/unapp.asp) Retrieved June 1, 2010
4. Prescribing Consensus Statement  
New Zealand College of Midwives (2002)
5. Informed Consent Consensus Statement  
New Zealand College of Midwives (2000)
6. Complementary Therapy Consensus Statement  
New Zealand College of Midwives (2000)
7. Code of Health and Disability Services Consumer Rights (1996)  
Health and Disability Commissioner  
[www.hdc.org.nz/theact/theact-thecode](http://www.hdc.org.nz/theact/theact-thecode)

8. Supplying unapproved medicines. Medsafe  
[www.medsafe.govt.nz/regulatory/unapproved.asp](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/regulatory/unapproved.asp)
9. Remifentanyl hydrochloride Data Sheet. Medsafe  
[www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/u/ultivainj.htm](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/u/ultivainj.htm)
10. Misoprostol Data Sheet. Medsafe  
[www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/c/cytotectab.htm](http://www.medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/c/cytotectab.htm)

The purpose of New Zealand College of Midwives Consensus Statements is to provide women, midwives and the maternity services with the profession's position on any given situation. The guidelines are designed to educate and support best practice.

All position statements are regularly reviewed and updated in line with evidence-based practice.