The College of Nurses of Ontario presents Initiation: An Overview.
This webcast is about initiation, one of the three ways you get the authority to perform a controlled act procedure.

Initiation is the process of independently deciding that a controlled act procedure is required, then performing that procedure without an order.

This webcast will explain the conditions for initiating a controlled act and who has the authority to initiate specific procedures.

We’ve included practice examples so you can get a clear idea of what we mean.

This presentation refers to the College’s Authorizing Mechanisms practice guideline. You will find it helpful to review the document while you watch the webcast.

This is one of four presentations that talks about authorizing mechanisms and controlled acts. The other webcasts are an overview of:
Controlled Acts
Delegation and Orders.
Learning Objectives

- Understand the conditions for initiating a controlled act procedure
- Know what an RN and an RPN can initiate

After watching this webcast you should:
• Understand the conditions for initiating a controlled act procedure, and
• Know the difference between what an RN and an RPN can initiate.
How You Get the Authority

There are three authorizing mechanisms:
1. Orders
2. Delegation
3. Initiation

There are three ways that you get the authority to perform a controlled act procedure. These are called authorizing mechanisms.

First is an order. This is when you get the authority to perform a controlled act from a physician, Nurse Practitioner, dentist, midwife or chiropodist.

Second is delegation. This is a process where you receive the authority to perform a controlled act that is not authorized to nursing.

Third is initiation, the focus of this presentation.

For more information and practice examples on Delegation and Orders, watch the related webcasts.
Initiation

RNAs or RPNs can initiate and perform a controlled act procedure in some situations.

Know that your ability to initiate may be limited by other legislation or practice-setting policies.

The Nursing Act, 1991 identifies which controlled act procedures a nurse can initiate in certain situations. This means that you can perform the procedure without getting an order. The Authorizing Mechanisms practice guideline includes a chart that lists the controlled act procedures that may be initiated by RNs and RPNs.

Although you may have the legal authority to initiate certain controlled act procedures, your ability to initiate may be limited by other legislation or practice-setting policies. For example, the Public Hospitals Act restricts nurses from initiating controlled acts within the hospital setting, because all orders must be written by a physician, NP, dentist or midwife.

In contrast, home health nurses may initiate controlled acts while caring for clients in their homes, if it’s permitted by their organizational policy.

You should review your organization’s policy and relevant legislation to determine if and what you can initiate.
Conditions for Initiation

- Competent to perform and determine that the procedure is needed
- Determine that the client’s condition requires the procedure while considering risks and benefits, predictability, resources available and other relevant factors

The conditions that must be met before you initiate a controlled act procedure are listed on the slide. These conditions are included in the Authorizing Mechanisms practice guideline.

The conditions for initiating a procedure are very similar to the conditions for performing a procedure with an order. However, when you initiate, you are making an independent decision that the procedure is required for the individual, and you are solely accountable for that decision.
Both RNs and RPNs have the authority to initiate certain controlled act procedures.

RN or RPN Initiation

- RNs can initiate a procedure and provide an order for an RPN
- RPNs can initiate a procedure but cannot provide an order

RN can initiate and perform certain procedures, and provide an order for an RPN to perform the controlled act.

RPNs can initiate and perform certain procedures, but cannot provide an order for another nurse to perform the controlled act.
For the controlled act of performing a procedure below the dermis, the Nursing Act outlines what an RN and RPN has the authority to initiate for the purpose of wound care. An RPN needs an order to irrigate, probe, debride and pack a wound. An RN can provide that order. However, other legislation and workplace policies could have an impact on the wound care an RPN can initiate, and if an RN has the ability to write an order.

Regardless of your education or knowledge of wound care, you can only initiate what is identified in the Nursing Act.
Both RNs and RPNs can initiate the controlled act procedure that requires *putting an instrument or finger beyond the anal verge*, but only for the purpose of assessing a client or assisting with health management activities. Examples are fecal disimpaction or inserting an over-the-counter suppository.

RNs also have the authority to initiate a procedure that requires *putting an instrument or finger into an artificial opening of the body*; RPNs do not have this authority. For example, an RN can initiate the suctioning of a tracheostomy. An RPN can only perform the procedure with an order.
In some circumstances, an RN can initiate an intravenous line of normal saline. For example, when establishing peripheral access and maintaining patency for a client who requires medical attention, and delaying venipuncture is likely to be harmful.

An RPN can only establish an intravenous line if there is an order.

We are often asked about the administration of medication by intravenous routes. This is not a controlled act. It is the insertion of the intravenous cannula below the dermis that is the controlled act procedure.
For more information on controlled acts and the ways you get authority to perform them, review the College documents listed in the slide.

All of these documents can be found on the College’s website.
Contact Us

Ask a Practice Consultant or Outreach Consultant:

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If you have questions about this webcast or controlled acts in general, then contact the College.

Practice Consultants and sector-specific Outreach Consultants are available to answer your questions.
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