

Name of Policy: Search, Seizure and Disposition of Drugs, Weapons and Potentially Harmful Items



Policy Number: 3364-120-70

Effective date: April 1, 2023

Approving Officer: Chief Nursing Officer
Service Chief

Original effective date: June 1, 2014

Responsible Agent: Chief Nursing Officer
Service Chief

Scope: The University of Toledo Medical Center

Key words:

	New policy proposal		Minor/technical revision of existing policy
	Major revision of existing policy	X	Reaffirmation of existing policy

(A) Policy statement

All personnel have the responsibility of maintaining a safe and therapeutic milieu for patients, visitors, and staff members. When there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a chemical substance, weapon, or harmful object is present on the unit, nursing personnel on duty evaluate the situation and take necessary measures to remove those objects which compromise the health and safety of the patient or those in contact with the patient.

(B) Purpose

To provide a safe, therapeutic milieu for all patients and a safe environment for the staff and others.

(C) Procedure

A search may be authorized by the charge nurse when nursing staff observe incidents or behavior that reasonably indicates the patient is in possession of a substance and/or objects that are potentially dangerous to him/her or others.

- (1) Room and clothing search.

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- (a) Notify the patient of the search prior to the search. The patient may remain in the room.
 - (b) A minimum of two staff members are assigned to search the area.
 - (c) The patient may be requested to change into hospital gown to have clothes searched.
 - (d) This search includes everything but the patient.
 - (e) The physician and charge nurse on duty are informed of any objects found.
- (2) Body search.
- (a) A body search is conducted only if a nursing assessment indicates a need for this search.
 - (b) The attending physician is notified immediately of a suspected ingestion.
 - (c) A body search is done only by a member of the same sex.
 - (d) Whenever possible, another staff person of the same sex is present when a body search is performed; at least 2 staff members are always present.
 - (e) An internal, physical body search is done only by a physician per UTMC policy.
- (3) Disposition of unauthorized substance/harmful object.
- (a) Refer to UTMC policy for disposition of unauthorized substances/harmful objects.
 - (b) Nursing staff is responsible for informing patients on admission about items that cannot be kept in patient rooms. Please refer to [guideline Unit contraband](#).
 - (c) The patient's belongings are searched by staff on admission to the unit.
 - (d) Patients returning from passes are required to have items they have brought back with them searched by nursing staff.

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(e) If a patient needs an item which is restricted, the charge nurse or treatment teams make special arrangements based on clinical judgment.

(D) Documentation

(1) Progress notes include:

- (a) Reason for conducting the search.
- (b) Description of substance/object found and its disposition.
- (c) Observation of patient's behavior and condition if there is suspected ingestion.

(2) An occurrence report is completed and returned to the risk manager if:

- (a) Suspected ingestion has occurred on the unit or while on a pass.
- (b) Harm has occurred to a patient or others.

(3) Formal notice must be provided to the patient if there has been a restriction of rights.

<p>Approved by:</p> <p><u> /s/ </u> Kurt Kless, MSN, MBA, RN, NE-BC Date Chief Nursing Officer</p> <p><u> /s/ </u> Tanvir Singh, MD Date Service Chief</p> <p><i>Review and Revision Completed By: Inpatient Behavioral Health Administration</i></p>	<p>Policies superseded by this policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>None</i> <p>Initial effective date: June 1, 2014</p> <p>Review/Revision Date: <i>6/2017</i> <i>6/2020</i> <i>4/1/2023</i></p> <p>Next review date: <i>4/1/2026</i></p>
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