

# PRACTICAL PRESCRIBING

## Molly Courtenay helps resolve everyday issues for nurse prescribers



**Q** As an nurse independent prescriber (NIP), am I able to prescribe and administer unlicensed

**medications? If not, can I administer them if prescribed by a doctor? The product in question is Tuberculin PPD (or the Mantoux test).**

**A** As a result of medicines legislation passed in December 2009, nurse and pharmacist independent prescribers are now

able to prescribe unlicensed medicines for their patients, on the same basis as doctors and supplementary prescribers. These changes can be found in the January 2010 Drug Tariff.<sup>1</sup>

The announcement by the MHRA was in response to its consultation which proposed amendments to medicines legislation to allow mixing of medicines in palliative care.<sup>2</sup>

The law change in response to this consultation also gives doctors (who can already mix medicines themselves) the power to direct others to mix medicines; and allows non-med-

ical prescribers to mix medicines and to direct others to do so. These changes apply to all clinical areas where the mixing of medicines is accepted practice.

Prior to these changes in legislation, nurse independent prescribers were only able to administer unlicensed medicines if prescribed by a doctor, i.e. a patient specific direction (PSD).

PSDs need to be prescribed for patients on an individual basis by a registered prescriber on a named patient basis. The dose, route and frequency or appliance to be sup-

plied or administered must also be supplied by the prescriber.

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### References

1. [www.mhra.gov.uk/Howweregulate/Medicines/Medicinesregulatorynews/CON051822](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/Howweregulate/Medicines/Medicinesregulatorynews/CON051822)
2. Public consultation (MLX 356): Proposal for amendments to medicines legislation to allow mixing of medicines in palliative care. London: MHRA