

Dear Camp Onas Parent/Guardian,

We want to make you aware of, and help you understand **significant changes to our medication policy**, so you can plan and prepare for the summer. **These changes will affect all medications* brought to camp.** Many families who didn't previously need a doctor or pharmacy will now need to use both before bringing **medications*** to camp.

Please take a moment to review the policy changes, and do not hesitate to give us a call or send us an email if you have questions. **We are here to help!** (610) 847-5858, friends@camponas.org.

--The Camp Onas Staff

1. Overview: This is a long list...here is a summary:

In short, **ALL medications*** coming to camp need to have:

- A dated order from a licensed physician/ practitioner telling our nurses to give the medication.

And

- Arrive in pharmacy-prepared, individual-dose packaging (ex: blister packs, pill packs).

2. Prescriptions & Orders required for ALL Daily Medications* (Including medications* a parent/guardian might generally give without a prescription).

What has changed?

All routinely-taken **medications*** brought to Camp Onas must be accompanied by **both** a prescription and prescriber's order.

What do I need to do?

Tell your doctor's office that your child needs **an order for each medication*** you want them to take while at camp. We have a printable form on our website to assist with this (to email, fax, drop off, etc.) though some doctor/ practitioners may use their own prescription pads/stationary or on-line orders program ... any of those options is acceptable. Be sure they include all daily non-prescription medications, supplements, vitamins, etc. your child will take while at camp. Ask your provider to write **both** a prescription and orders for each of those **medications***. The prescription is for the pharmacy to package the medication and the order is for the nurse to give the medication (yes even "Over the Counter (OTC)" medications). Pennsylvania statutes require that all **medications*** need both a prescription and prescriber's order.

Why?

In Pennsylvania, nurses are not permitted to give a medication without **both** a prescription and an order from the prescriber, even if a parent/ guardian requests the medication be given.*

Pennsylvania is a regulation-heavy state with regards to health care and child safety. First, nurses are required at camps (and we wouldn't consider running Onas without them!) Second, Pennsylvania nurses cannot give any medication without a licensed prescribers' order. Further, regulations require that all medications come from a container that was "last touched" by a pharmacist (or is in its original commercial container.)

We require pharmacy-prepared blister packs/ pill packs because if all medications came to Onas in their original bottles, the time it would take for campers to receive their medications would cut into campers' meal, activity, and free time.

What about the occasional medications my child sometimes needs?

Camp Onas nurses are allowed to dispense the as-needed medications approved by you in the on-line health form as needed. Those medications have been prescribed by Camp's doctor to be used as directed for their indicated use (Examples of as-needed medications include: antacids, Tylenol, cough drops, topical itch relief, Benadryl, antibiotic ointment, etc.)

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***Medications:** All products given by our nurses. Includes all prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, supplements, probiotics, ointments, inhalers, saline nasal spray, and homeopathic remedies. (Examples include: Zyrtec, Claritin, Allegra, Zantac, Lactaid, Melatonin, preventive swimmers' ear drops, daily miralax, "eczema cream", Flonase, Zaditor eye drops, local bee pollen, essential oils)

3. Medication* Packaging

What has changed?

All daily/ routine **medications*** must be in **pharmacy-prepared blister-packs/ pill packs**. We will no longer use or accept medications in “Days-of-the-Week” pill boxes or other non-pharmacy dosage containers, nor will we accept entire pill bottles.

What do I need to do?

Bring all **medications* to camp in a pharmacy-prepared blister pack or pill pack.**

Option A (Use the pharmacy we’re working with)

Horsham Pharmacy: (www.horshamrx.com) is local, affordable, and will deliver medications directly to camp. They are also a small, independent business that is easy to work with. They have printable prescription sheets available to make it easy for your doctor/ practitioner to complete. They charge \$1/week to package the medications in blister packs, and they accept most insurance plans (to cover the prescriptions), and will sell and package “over the counter” medications at the store price. Their contact information and forms are on our website. **They will need your prescription by June 1st and they will deliver your camper’s packs directly to Onas.**

OR

Option B (Use your own pharmacy)

You can work with your own pharmacy to have your camper’s medications dispensed into blister/ pill packs for their time at camp. Most national pharmacies do not charge for the packaging service (it’s a complimentary service they offer with your purchase, and the packaged medications are shipped to you). Most pharmacies will package both prescribed and “over-the-counter” medications together, provided you have a prescription for all of the requested medications.



What about...?

Non-pill medications, such as inhalers, liquids, injections, and creams may still be brought to camp in their original packaging, provided the original packaging and pharmacy label are attached, **and** they are accompanied by prescriber’s orders (instructions).

Why?

- In PA, only pharmacists and prescribers (not nurses or other healthcare providers) are allowed to dispense medication to smaller containers. Blister and pill packs are “pre-dispensed” by a pharmacist.
- Pill-packs/ blister packs are the industry standard used in schools, camps, and other institutional settings. They help healthcare give medications to the correct person, at the correct time, in the correct amount, and according to prescriber’s instructions.

4. Other Questions and Answers:

What is the difference between a prescription and prescriber’s orders, do you really need both?

The prescription is for the pharmacist, the orders are the prescriber’s instruction to healthcare staff (like nurses) to administer the medication. **Yes, we really do need both.**

Why can’t I just send the whole bottle of pills instead of getting special packaging?

Managing all camper and staff medications in their original bottles without pre-dispensing the doses is not possible for us, and it would cause campers to miss out on fun activities because medications would take so long to distribute. Individual dose packaging is also safer.

What about non-pill medications?

Inhalers, liquids, creams, injections, etc. may be provided in their original packaging. They must be accompanied by a prescription/ box label and prescriber’s orders.

Can I just pack my camper’s meds/supplements in their belongings to take on their own?

Please don’t. Integrity is one of the key values we hold at Onas, and doing so would be against the rules. Our policy of no medications in the bunks is for the protection of all.

Have you considered the burden this places on families and busy parents/guardians?

We have. We’ve spent a lot of time finding a way to meet Pennsylvania requirements while limiting the burden on busy families, and this is the best solution we’ve found. If you are struggling to meet these requirements, please reach out ahead of June 1st.

Will you make an exception for me/ my camper? I have a good reason.

We recognize that all situations are different, but we are very unlikely to make exceptions. This policy is in place for legal and safety reasons, both of which we take seriously, but we will listen and attempt to make a plan with you, provided this happens prior to the start of the summer season.