



College of Pharmacists
of British Columbia

**PRACTICE
REVIEW
PROGRAM** 

Patient Identification Verification

Patient Identification Verification

Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act (PODSA) Bylaws require that the identity of the patient is confirmed before providing pharmacy services.

As a pharmacist practising in the community, it is your duty and responsibility to make sure the **right person** gets the **right dose** of the **right drug** at the **right time**.

The *very first step* in providing pharmacy care is to positively identify the patient—be sure you have the **right person**. Without correctly identifying the patient, the rest of the steps in patient care and patient safety can be compromised.

For NEW patients:

Unless you personally know the patient, you must **ask** for identification to create a patient profile at your pharmacy. Positive identification is best achieved by viewing one piece of primary ID or two pieces of secondary ID.

Primary Identification

- BC Services Card
- Driver's License
- Passport
- Provincial Identity Card issued by the Province of BC
- Police Identity Card issued by RCMP or Municipality
- Certificate of Indian Status Card
- Permanent Resident Card issued by the Government of Canada

Secondary Identification

- Care Card issued by the Province of B.C.
- Birth Certificate
- Canadian Citizenship Card
- Record of Landing of Permanent Residency
- Work/Visitor/Study Permit issued by the Government of Canada
- Naturalization Certificate
- Marriage Certificate
- Change of Name Certificate
- Identification or Discharge Certificate from External Affairs Canada or Canadian Armed Forces
- Consular Identity Card

Note: Primary ID contains photo identification. BC Services Cards are acceptable as primary ID, but Care Cards are only acceptable as secondary ID.

View the piece(s) of ID to verify the patient. For best practices, document that identification has been verified. It is not necessary to photocopy the ID or write down document numbers (eg. Driver's License number) as proof of verification.

For RETURNING patients:

Before providing patient-specific pharmacy services, make sure you take reasonable steps to confirm the ID of the patient.

If you are unfamiliar with the patient, you should still ask for patient identification.

If you are familiar with the patient from a previous encounter, you can still take extra steps to verify identity. Ask for their date of birth, address or phone number to confirm their identity.

Ask open-ended questions, where the patient is required to give you the information. Avoid close-ended questions where the patient can simply answer with a yes or no. Sometimes,

patients may just say “yes” to agree with you because they didn’t hear or understand the question. Also, by asking close-ended questions, you may be inadvertently divulging personally identifiable information.

The identity of the patient or other healthcare provider must be confirmed before providing pharmacy services including but not limited to:

- Establishing a patient record
- Updating a patient’s clinical information
- Providing a printout of a patient record (either through a PharmaNet mail out or in-pharmacy records)
- Viewing a patient record
- Answering questions regarding the existence and content of a patient record
- Correcting information on a patient record
- Establishing, changing, or deleting a patient keyword
- Disclosing relevant patient record information to another registrant for the purposes of dispensing or monitoring.

Who can complete this activity?

| | Pharmacist | Pharmacy Technician |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Verify Patient Identification | ✓ | ✓ |

For more information, please refer to: Professional Practice Policy-54 and PODSA Bylaw 22.

Keep in mind, written confirmation of the *registrant* who verified the patient identification is a requirement at the time of dispensing each prescription in order to take responsibility for the ID check.

Why is this a fundamental standard?

Case in point:

An investigation by both the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC and the College of Pharmacists of BC into prescription fraud identified an impersonator who managed to obtain multiple prescriptions for various narcotics. Between January 2007 and January 2013, the impersonator obtained more than 250 prescriptions from multiple physicians, which were filled by pharmacists at 34 different pharmacy locations.

<http://www.bcpharmacists.org/news/regulators-investigation-prescription-fraud-identifies-150-health-professionals>

Being vigilant by checking every single patient’s identification is a fundamental principle to ensure that the **right patient** gets the **right drug**.