College of Pharmacists
of British Columbia

PRACTICE REVIEW PROGRAM

Product Distribution

Product Distribution

The *Health Professions Act* (HPA) bylaws require specific steps to be taken when a prescription is prepared and checked.

As a pharmacy technician, it is your duty and responsibility to make sure prescriptions are prepared with the ***right product*** and with the ***right prescription information.***

The *very first step* in product distribution is product preparation—be sure you have the ***right product***. Preparing the prescription product correctly is the critical step in ensuring product distribution and patient safety is maintained.

Product Preparation

When preparing a prescription product, you must first ensure you choose the correct drug product. This includes making sure the prescription product label ***matches*** the manufacturer's label on the stock bottle with regards to the following information:

- Drug
- Dosage Form
- Strength
- Quantity
- Drug Identification Number (DIN) ***(Community Pharmacy)***

In addition, the product's ***expiry date*** must be checked to ensure that it is not expired and will not expire within the duration of use specified on the prescription.

Once the correct product has been selected and confirmed, the next step is to ensure the product ***matches*** the prescription product label. In community pharmacy practice, registrants must also ensure the prescription product label matches the information on the prescription and the prescription meets all legal requirements (*HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1 – Section 6(2)(a) to (g)*).

Note that hospital pharmacies which dispense drugs to staff, outpatients or the general public must meet the requirements set out in the *Community Pharmacy Standards of Practice* (*HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1)*.

HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1 - Section 6(2)(a) to (g) states:

6(2) Upon receipt from the practitioner, a prescription must include the following information:

(a) the **date** the prescription was written;
(b) the name of the **patient**;
(c) the name of the **drug** or ingredients and strength if applicable;
(d) the **quantity** of the drug;
(e) the **dosage instructions** including the frequency, interval or maximum daily dose;
(f) **refill authorization** if applicable, including number of refills and interval between refills;
(g) the **name and signature of the practitioner** for written prescriptions;

Final Check

Once a product has been prepared, a registrant must then perform a final check and record his or her identity in writing.

The final check of a prescription includes ensuring:

1) The prescription product label ***matches the manufacturer's label*** on the stock bottle (as outlined above).
2) The prescription product label ***matches the information on the prescription*** (as outlined above).
3) A ***pharmacist*** has completed a ***clinical assessment*** of the prescription after reviewing the patient profile.

Who can complete this activity?

	Pharmacist	Pharmacy Technician
Product Preparation	√	√
Final Check	√	√
Clinical Assessment (as part of Final Check)	√	

If a registrant prepares a product they must include written confirmation of their identity. In addition, the registrant that performs the final check must also include written confirmation of their identity at the time of dispensing. This documentation must be in writing, readily available, and retained for at least three years after the date on which the prescription product was last dispensed.

For more information, please refer to: HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 1 Section 4, 6, 9.1, and 10, as well as HPA Bylaws Schedule F Part 2 Section 3.1, 4, and 17.

Why is this a fundamental standard?

Case in point:

Each year the College of Pharmacists of BC receives complaints regarding medication dispensing errors by pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. These include complaints regarding:

- Patients receiving the incorrect medication or strength of medication;
- Prescription labels containing incorrect information, or information inconsistent with the original prescription;
- Patients receiving the incorrect quantity of medication;
- Patients receiving an expired medication;
- Patients receiving medications which were incorrectly compounded; and
- Pharmacists not identifying drug interactions and/or documented allergy information, resulting in adverse effects for the patient.

In almost all of these situations, careful product preparation and an adequate final check could have prevented these errors from occurring.

http://www.bcpharmacists.org/readlinks/pharmacy-matters-taking-accountability-and-following-dispensing-errors

http://www.bcpharmacists.org/readlinks/pharmacy-matters-reducing-errors-and-increase-patient-safety-following-standards-practice

Being vigilant when preparing prescription products and performing a careful final check is a fundamental principle to ensure that patients receive the ***right product*** with the ***right prescription information***.