

Standards for Pharmacy Business and Services

Pursuant to Clause 4, Schedule 8, of the Health Practitioners Act

GUIDELINES FOR DISPENSING AND DISPENSING ERRORS

These guidelines have been prepared by the Pharmaceutical Defence Limited and are based on the Quality Care Pharmacy Program. It is designed to minimise the potential for dispensing errors and to save time and expense. A number of routine checks and procedures have been prepared for pharmacists' guidance and pharmacists are strongly advised to observe them on each occasion that a prescription is dispensed.

1. Prescription Check

Patient Details

Name
Address
Phone Number
Mobile Phone Number
Concessional Entitlements
Medicare Number
Allergies
Child's Age
Weight

Prescription Details

Date
Doctor's Signature or Authorised Electronic Signature
S4 requirements
S8 requirements
HIC Authority Approval

2. Computer Input

Using Pharmacist original copy of prescription check:

- Medication profile for consistency of treatment;
- Interactions;
- Evidence of misuse;
- Then generate labels. Repeat Authorisations and CMI's where applicable.

3. Drug Selection

Using Pharmacist original copy of prescription SELECT & CHECK:

- Drug;
- Strength; and
- Quantity.

4. Labelling

Label each item CHECKING:

- Expiry Date;
- Drug, strength and quantity against pharmacist original copy of prescription;
- When attaching label, do not obscure important information on manufacturer's label (especially name, strength and expiry date)

GUIDELINES FOR DISPENSING AND DISPENSING ERRORS (cont)

5. Label Check

- Swipe bar code with scanner and check on computer screen for drug name/patients name/address, and date.
- For multiple item dispensing, it is recommended to keep all items together in an appropriate container.

Suggestion:

Selecting drugs prior to computer input has in many cases reduced selection errors especially in peak dispensing periods and for Locums unfamiliar with the dispensary layout.

6. Assembling Prescription

- Assemble dispensed medicines with all documentation and counselling aids.
- Check all containers belonging to the prescription.
- Store finished prescription out of the reach of the public and so it is not identifiable by the public.
- Place in a container which leaves all items visible.

7. Collection of Prescription

- Consider whether counselling is required for this patient.
- Is a CMI printout required?

8. Final Check

Check:

- The drug, strength and quantity against the pharmacist original copy of the prescription.
- Verify correct person is receiving prescription by checking name and address or cross-check if numbering system used.

PDL strongly recommends the use of scanners in dispensing

GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW IN CASE OF A DISPENSING ERROR

1. When presented with a complaint, ensure the matter is handled by the pharmacist.
2. Show concern and willingness to correct any error.
3. Check out the alleged error and if established, replace the offending item immediately. If it was dispensed at another pharmacy, check with that pharmacy and replace if possible. Take care not to compound the problem. Retain the incorrect item to prevent further misuse.
4. Apologise and show concern. Give a sensible explanation if possible. If the error is obvious there is no point in being evasive – admit the mistake.

GUIDELINES FOR DISPENSING AND DISPENSING ERRORS (cont)

5. Determine whether any of the wrong drug had been administered. Has any harm been suffered? Has any expense been incurred? If so, it may be sensible at this stage to say that you will, of course, cover these expenses.
DO NOT OFFER COMPENSATION – This may be regarded as an attempt to bribe your way out of trouble.
6. Show empathy with the patient. This gives them the opportunity to vent their feelings so you might learn where you truly stand.
7. At all times remain calm, sympathetic and co-operative. Advise that you will investigate how this occurred and take action to tighten procedures. Obtain a phone number for any follow-up.
8. Telephone P D L (G I C) and notify of the problem. You will be advised of what further action to take. It is important that you report all incidents to PDL immediately.
9. Record the details and all relevant information in your diary.
10. If after the patient has left the pharmacy, if you suspect that an error has been made, act speedily to correct the problem, without causing any unnecessary alarm.
11. When a complaint is initiated by correspondence it is MOST IMPORTANT that you do not reply without first asking advice from PDL. Do not put anything in writing without advice from PDL.
12. If confronted by an investigating officer seeking information relating to drugs dispensed for a patient who has died or whose health has been compromised, it is recommended that PDL be contacted immediately so that legal advice can be provided.
13. When any incident occurs contact the prescriber as a matter of professional courtesy.