

# Prescription And Prescription Handling

## Prescription And Prescription Handling

### Definition of Prescription

- A prescription is a legal, written (or electronic) instruction from a registered medical practitioner (RMP) or other authorized prescriber to a pharmacist for the preparation, dispensing, and administration of a drug or treatment to a specific patient.
- **Key Points:**
  - It authorizes the supply of a medication and includes essential patient-specific directions.
  - A prescription can be manual (handwritten) or digital (e-prescription).
  - In legal terms, it serves as both a clinical order and a medical record.

### Parts of a Prescription

A standard prescription is made up of several essential components:

| Section                        | Description                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Date</b>                 | The date on which the prescription is issued. Essential for record-keeping and assessing validity.                                     |
| <b>2. Superscription (R)</b>   | Latin term "Recipe" meaning "take thou". It symbolizes the start of the prescription.                                                  |
| <b>3. Inscription</b>          | Contains the <b>name and strength</b> of the drug and its <b>dosage form</b> (e.g., tablet, suspension).                               |
| <b>4. Subscription</b>         | The pharmacist's instructions for <b>compounding/dispensing</b> (mostly applicable to extemporaneous preparations).                    |
| <b>5. Signatura (Sig.)</b>     | Directions for the patient—includes dose, route, frequency, duration, and any special instructions.                                    |
| <b>6. Prescriber's Details</b> | Name, qualifications, registration number, address, and signature of the prescriber (essential for legal and identification purposes). |
| <b>7. Patient's Details</b>    | Name, age, sex, weight (especially for pediatric dosing), address, and sometimes diagnosis.                                            |
| <b>8. Refill Information</b>   | Specifies the number of times the prescription can be refilled (if any).                                                               |

### Legality of Prescriptions

- A prescription is a legal document, and its legality is governed by national laws and regulations (e.g., Drugs and Cosmetics Act in India, FDA laws in the US).
- **Legal Requirements:**
  - Must be issued by a licensed prescriber (doctor, dentist, veterinarian, etc.).
  - Must include legible handwriting (or digital print), proper drug nomenclature, and dosage.
  - Should contain complete patient information.
  - Must not prescribe controlled substances without proper authorization and documentation.
  - Tampering, forgery, or unauthorized alterations are punishable by law.
  - Schedule X, H, H1, and Narcotic Drugs require additional documentation and retention.

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## **Prescription Handling**

- Pharmacists must follow systematic and ethical procedures to handle prescriptions:

### **Steps in Handling a Prescription:**

#### **1. Receiving the Prescription**

- Accept only valid and legible prescriptions.
- Confirm identity of the patient or caregiver.
- For e-prescriptions, ensure secure access and authenticity.

#### **2. Reading and Interpreting**

- Carefully interpret the drug name, strength, dosage, and route.
- Be alert for **unusual dosages**, abbreviations, or ambiguous instructions.
- Verify prescriber's credentials.

#### **3. Clinical Check**

- Check for **drug-drug interactions, allergies, or contraindications**.
- Evaluate **duplicate therapy** or inappropriate medication.

#### **4. Data Entry and Record Maintenance**

- Enter all prescription data in the **dispensing software or manual register**.
- Update patient medication history.

#### **5. Dispensing and Labelling**

- Select correct medication and **dispense as per dosage form and strength**.

- **Label the medicine container** clearly with appropriate details.

## 6. Counseling and Patient Education

- Explain the dose, timing, route, side effects, storage, and precautions.
- Answer patient queries and reinforce understanding.

## 7. Documentation and Filing

- Retain a copy for legal records.
- For **narcotics or psychotropic drugs**, ensure record-keeping as per regulatory laws.

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## Labelling of Dispensed Medications

- Labelling is a critical part of safe medication use. It helps ensure the patient uses the medication correctly and safely.

### Main Label (Primary Label)

- This is the official label affixed to the medicine container by the pharmacist.
- **Must Include:**
  - Name of the patient
  - Name and address of pharmacy
  - Date of dispensing
  - Name and strength of the drug
  - Dosage form and quantity
  - Directions for use (Sig.)
  - Batch number and expiry date (optional but advisable)
  - Storage instructions
  - Cautionary statements, if required
  - Schedule warning (e.g., "Schedule H drug – To be sold by retail on the prescription of a Registered Medical Practitioner only")

### Ancillary Labels

- These are supplementary labels used to convey specific warnings or instructions that may not fit on the main label.
- **Common Examples:**
  - "Take on an empty stomach"

- “May cause drowsiness. Avoid driving.”
- “Shake well before use”
- “Keep in a cool, dry place”
- “Avoid alcohol while taking this medicine”
- “Do not take with dairy products”
- Ancillary labels improve adherence and safety, especially for chronic or high-risk medications.

## Pictograms

- Pictograms are visual symbols or icons used on labels to help communicate important information to patients with low literacy or language barriers.
- **Common Pictograms:**
  -  Clock – “Take at specific time”
  -  Dropper – “Eye/Ear drops”
  -  Car – “Do not drive”
  -  Morning /  Night – “Morning/Night use”
  -  Glass of water with slash – “Do not take with water”
  -  Snowflake – “Refrigerate”
  -  Lock – “Keep out of reach of children”
- They are **especially helpful for pediatric, geriatric, and illiterate populations.**

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## Brief Instructions on Medication Usage

- Patients must be guided with clear instructions to ensure rational and safe use of medications.

## Instructions Should Cover:

### 1. Dosage

- Amount per dose (e.g., 500 mg)
- Frequency (e.g., three times a day)
- Duration (e.g., for 5 days)

### 2. Route of Administration

- Oral, sublingual, intramuscular, intravenous, rectal, topical, etc.

### 3. Time of Administration

- Before/after meals, morning/evening, bedtime

#### **4. Special Precautions**

- Alcohol restriction
- Food interactions
- Driving or machinery operation
- Sunlight exposure

#### **5. Missed Dose Guidance**

- "If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it's almost time for the next dose."

#### **6. What to Do in Case of Side Effects**

- Watch for rashes, nausea, drowsiness, etc.
- When to contact the doctor/pharmacist

#### **7. Storage Conditions**

- Room temperature, refrigeration, away from sunlight

#### **8. Disposal of Unused Medication**

- Do not flush or throw in trash
- Return to pharmacy if possible

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## **Dispensing Process**

### **Definition:**

- The dispensing process refers to the professional and legal procedure in which pharmacists interpret, prepare, package, label, and provide medicines based on a valid prescription, ensuring that patients receive the correct drug, in the correct dose, with appropriate instructions and counseling.

### **Step-by-Step Process of Dispensing:**

#### **A. Receiving the Prescription**

- Check Legitimacy: Ensure the prescription is issued by an authorized prescriber (doctor, dentist, etc.).
- Verify Completeness: Confirm it includes the patient's name, age, date, prescriber's details, drug name, strength, dosage form, frequency, and duration.
- Understand the Intent: Comprehend the prescriber's therapeutic goal, diagnosis if known.



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