

5 Things to Know About Renewing Prescriptions

Pharmacists are reminded of their roles and responsibilities when renewing prescriptions for patients

1. Pharmacists can renew prescriptions.

Pharmacists, interns and registered pharmacy students under the supervision of a pharmacist have the independent authority to renew any prescriptions for the purpose of continuity of care (with the exception of controlled substances and monitored drugs).

Assess the situation and consider the following:

- What are the potential risks and benefits to the patient? Has the medication been well-tolerated, safe and effective?
- Is the renewal in the best interest of the patient?
- Do you have the knowledge and skill to prescribe the drug based on its indication for use?
- Do you have access to the original prescription or the information it contained?

2. Pharmacists should be indicated as the prescriber on the prescription dispensing record.

When issuing a renewal, you assume full responsibility and liability for that prescription and the dispensing record should reflect you as the prescriber. In cases where the patient chooses to take the prescription to another pharmacy to be dispensed, it must be clear who issued the prescription.

3. Pharmacists are not limited to only one renewal.

The regulations do not prohibit you from renewing a prescription that was previously renewed by a pharmacist. The regulation defines "renew" as "to provide a patient with a prescription that repeats a prescription previously provided to that patient."

In the interest of continuity of care, you should independently assess the situation, and ensure your primary focus is the well-being of the patient.

The prescribed quantity of a renewal cannot exceed the total quantity (including refills) that was authorized by the original prescriber or a six month supply, whichever is less.

4. Pharmacists must notify the original prescriber of the renewal.

The purpose of prescriber notification is to ensure continuity of care and encourage a collaborative relationship between the pharmacist, the patient, and the patient's primary health care provider.

After prescribing a renewal, you must always notify the original prescriber and, if different, the patient's primary health care provider, within a reasonable period of time. There is no need to ensure receipt of the notification.

5. Pharmacists must document their decision and rationale.

In addition to documenting the renewal itself, the reference to the original prescription, and the prescriber notification, it is equally important to document your rationale for deciding to renew a prescription.

Documentation on the patient record should be thorough and concise and reflect the factors influencing your decision and be completed in a timely manner. These factors may include results of patient assessment, review of medical history, lab tests results or potential drug therapy problems, among others. 