

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR DATE CHECKING OF PHARMACY STOCK:

It is essential that date checking procedures are in place to protect the public, and yourselves, from the supply of date expired medicines. Sufficiently robust procedures should be established and followed as a matter of good practice. The RPSGB have produced this guidance to help support clinical governance within pharmacy.

The supply of substandard medicines is an offence. Date expired medication is more likely to be substandard and its supply to a patient is seen as professionally unacceptable. It could also constitute a potential breach of S64 of the Medicines Act 1968 in that the medicine is not of the nature and quality specified in the prescription.

Here are some core components of a date checking and housekeeping procedures:

- A date check of incoming stock from wholesalers would identify short dated products.
- It is recommended that stock be placed in strict date order on the shelf i.e. longest dated stock to the back.
- A regular cleaning schedule where all stock is checked (including retail lines) could be established. Medicines with less than one month's shelf life should be removed and items with less than four months shelf life marked conspicuously. The entire stock should be checked regularly and once every 3 months on a rolling programme is recommended.
- It is good practice to keep a record of short dated stock, and once the item is within one month of its expiry date, it should then be removed from the shelf.
- A point of supply check to prevent any medicines that slip through the above checks from reaching the patient/customer.
- Don't forget to check stock kept in the fridge or controlled drugs cabinet.

These procedures are equally applicable to dispensary, shop and storeroom stock.

It is recommended that date checking procedures are incorporated into a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Top Tips:

- Allocate certain areas for each member of staff to have responsibility for.
- The overall responsibility for the management of this task could be delegated to a senior member of staff such as a dispensary manager, technician, pre-registration student etc.
- The pharmacist could carry out a supervisory role.

Section	Date Completed	Initials	Date Completed	Initials	Date Completed	Initials	Date Completed	Initials
Inhalers / Section A / Shelf D	8 th Jan 05	AP	6 th May 05	AP	5 th Sept 05	AP		

For the most up to date resource tool please refer to the RPSGB website:

<http://www.rpsgb.org/protectingthepublic/inspectorate/>

Issue 4. Effective date: November 2007

For all your legal and ethical inquiries please contact the RPSGB advisory service on 020 7572 2308

