

Handling Expired Medications Policy

This document is prepared by www.pharmasist.ca

1. Purpose

To ensure proper identification, handling, documentation, temporary storage, return, destruction, and disposal of expired medications while maintaining staff safety, patient safety, and pharmacy compliance.

2. Policy Statement

All expired medications must be identified, removed from active stock, documented, segregated, and either returned to the wholesaler or destroyed according to standard medication destruction procedures.

Monthly Expiration Check

- All drugs, including OTC products, are checked during the last week of every month.
- Medications expiring in less than one month must be removed from pharmacy shelves.
- Removed medications are either returned to wholesaler or destroyed according to pharmacy procedures.

Temporary Storage

- Expired medications may be stored temporarily in the designated expired medication section.
- The section must be separate from active stock.
- The area must be clearly labelled and easy to identify.
- Expired products must not be mixed with usable inventory.

3. Expired Narcotics, Controlled Drugs, and Targeted Substances

- Document expired narcotics, controlled drugs, and targeted substances in the Narcotic Destruction Log.
- Remove inventory from the pharmacy system at the time of documentation.
- Store temporarily in the separate expired section inside the narcotic safe.
- Destroy according to the pharmacy's Narcotic Destruction Procedure.
- Record drug name, strength, quantity, date, method of destruction, and staff initials.

Sticker System

-  **Red sticker:** medication expires in 2 months.
-  **Yellow sticker:** medication expires in 3 months.
- Stickers must be clearly visible.
- Stickers must not cover the drug name, strength, lot number, DIN, or expiry date.

Disposal of Standard Medications

- Return expired medications to the wholesaler when eligible.
- If return is not possible, destroy through standard medication destruction procedure.
- Send destroyed medication waste to Stericycle or another approved disposal provider.
- Document returned or destroyed products in the expired medications log.

4. Pharmacist Responsibilities

- Check medication expiry before dispensing.
- Ensure the patient can finish the full supply before the medication expiry date.
- Pay special attention to 90-day and 100-day supplies.
- Do not dispense short-dated medication when the patient's treatment period extends beyond the expiry date.

Expired Medication Log

- Date handled.
- Medication name and strength.
- Quantity removed.
- Method of disposal or return.
- Initials of staff member handling the item.

Narcotic Destruction Log

- Date of destruction.
- Drug name and strength.
- Quantity destroyed.
- Method of disposal.
- Initials of staff involved.
- Witness or pharmacist verification when required.

5. Staff and Manager Responsibilities

- Pharmacy staff must conduct monthly checks, remove expired products, apply stickers, and document returned or destroyed medications.
- The pharmacy manager must oversee compliance, audit expired medication logs and narcotic destruction logs, and provide staff training.
- Staff must be trained when the policy is updated or when handling procedures change.

6. Compliance and Review

- Regular inspections and audits will be conducted to confirm adherence.
- Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.
- This policy will be reviewed annually and updated when regulations, best practices, or pharmacy operations change.