

Streamline Processes to Return Expired or Unusable Meds

You play a big role in **returning expiring or excess inventory**.

Expiring meds. Work as a team to regularly check expiration dates. Removing expiring meds on a consistent, timely basis protects patients...controls costs...and helps your pharmacy avoid issues in an inspection.

Don't overlook easy-to-miss items...such as fridge or freezer meds, diabetes test strips, compounding ingredients, and special-order products.

Mark meds set to expire within the next year or so with a colored sticker or other identifier...so they can be used first or returned at the appropriate time. Remove stickers before sending meds back, if needed.

Overstock. Look for excess inventory...and use computer reports to identify "slow movers." Returning these meds or transferring them to a pharmacy that uses them regularly frees up shelves and inventory dollars.

Return process. Contact your wholesaler or returns company BEFORE returning an item. Each company has its own rules about what they'll take back and when...and will usually need to grant a return approval first.

For example, companies may not allow meds to be returned if they're too far beyond expiration, not in their original package, have an Rx label, or were purchased by the pharmacy from another supplier.

Separate any meds you're returning from the rest of your inventory...to ensure they aren't accidentally dispensed.

Ensure on-hand inventory counts in your computer are adjusted when returning meds...so you have an accurate record of what's in stock.

Help track the status of each return using online wholesaler portals, spreadsheets, etc...to make sure your pharmacy receives credit.

Get our CE, *Drug Inventory Control*, and tech tutorial, *The Ins and Outs of Pharmacy Inventory*, for tips on returns and recalls.

Key References:

- www.nacds.org/pdfs/membership/understanding_drivers.pdf
- Arch Pharm Pract 2011;2(4):151-6

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