



College of  
Physicians  
& Surgeons  
of Alberta

## **Triplicate Prescription Program**

*Information  
For The  
Pharmacist*

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# The Triplicate Prescription Program INFORMATION FOR THE PHARMACIST

## Introduction

In 1986, the Triplicate Prescription Program (TPP) was established to monitor the use of certain drugs prone to misuse and abuse for non-medical purposes. The TPP is a joint venture between the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, the Alberta College of Pharmacists, the Alberta Dental Association, and the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association.

The mandate of the TPP is:

- To improve patient care by providing timely and relevant information on targeted drugs to prescribers, pharmacists and consumers.
- To reduce the misuse and abuse (non-medical use) of targeted medications.
- To monitor the prescribing and dispensing practices of physicians and pharmacists for the targeted medications.
- To provide timely, accurate information and feedback to prescribers and pharmacists regarding prescribing and dispensing practices and patterns for the targeted drugs.
- To identify potential areas of drug misuse or abuse and work with TPP partners to address issues.

The [list of TPP medications](#) is provided on the website. To prescribe any of these medications it is **mandatory** that prescribers use the special TPP prescription forms. Physicians and dentists are required to use TPP prescription forms. Veterinarians are voluntarily involved in the program.

A triplicate prescription is a three-part prescription form. The prescriber retains one copy. Two copies are given to the patient to be used by the pharmacist to dispense the medication. The pharmacist retains one copy and the second copy is forwarded to the CPSA. Information from the triplicate prescription is entered into a database to monitor use of the TPP medications.

## Triplicate Prescriptions

Prescribers are issued personalized triplicate prescription pads. The prescriber's name, business address, and a unique prescriber identification number are imprinted on the pads. **The unique prescriber identification number is NOT the prescriber's registration number.**

Prescribers who work as a locum or have no fixed business address (clinic or hospital) will be issued special triplicate prescription pads. These pads will have the prescriber's name and the unique prescriber identification number. Each time a prescription is issued, the following must be entered on the form:

- The clinic or hospital name (or the professional's name for whom the prescriber is working),
- The clinic or hospital address, and
- The phone number.

The TPP medication list is included with each pad.

## Prescribing Triplicate Prescription Medication

To prescribe a triplicate prescription medication, the prescriber completes the triplicate prescription form as illustrated in [Appendix A](#).

The following information must appear on each prescription:

- *Date* – Prescriptions are only valid for three days (72 hours) from the date prescribed.
- *Patient's Health Care Number* – This information is required for patient identification. If the patient has a health care number from a province other than Alberta, the name of that province should be indicated with the number.
- *Date of Birth* – The date of birth assists in identification of the patient with a common name.
- *Patient's Full Name* – The provision of all given names and the patient's surname assists in reducing duplication of patient profiles in the TPP database.
- *Patient's Address* – The address provides further verification of the patient's identity in the database.
- *Drug and Strength* - A separate prescription is required for each TPP medication. This also includes different dosage amounts.  
For example: 115mg of MS Contin tid  
Two prescriptions should be issued – one for MS Contin 100mg and one for MS Contin 15mg
- *Quantity* – The total quantity of the prescription must be indicated both numerically and in written form to deter forgery. The use of time intervals for quantities (for example, one month's supply) is discouraged because this notation is subject to interpretation.
- *Directions for Use* – The directions for use should be as complete as possible as it assists in verifying quantities. An interval may be noted here.

Faxed prescriptions may be used for TPP medications, but the TPP form must be used as the data is entered based on the unique prescription number assigned to each triplicate prescription.

## Dispensing Triplicate Prescriptions

Upon receiving a triplicate prescription, the pharmacist must check the following aspects of the prescription:

- *Date Issued* – The patient must present the prescription within three days (72 hours) of the prescribing date. The time limit is set to reduce “circulation” time of the triplicate prescription. If the patient fails to present the prescription within three days (72 hours), the prescription becomes void and the patient should be asked to obtain a new triplicate prescription. Voided prescriptions should be marked “Void” on the face of the CPSA copy. **However**, the pharmacist may use their discretion to call the prescriber and obtain approval to use an “expired” triplicate prescription. The authorization should be documented on both copies.
- *Number of Copies* - Both copies of the prescription must be presented to the pharmacist.
- *Complete information* – The pharmacist should ensure that the prescription is complete, accurate, and legible.
- *Prescription Pad & Prescriber* - Prescribers can only use their own personalized TPP pad.
- *Methadone Prescriptions* – Physicians must have special authorization from the Therapeutics Products Directorate in order to prescribe methadone for opioid dependency or pain management. Pharmacists can check with the TPP at (780) 423-4764 or 1-800 561-3899 during business hours.
- *Drug & Strength* – only one drug and strength is permitted per prescription.

Pharmacists should NOT fill prescriptions for triplicate prescription medications issued on regular prescription pads. Occasionally, there are legitimate circumstances where the prescriber has used a regular prescription as a temporary substitute for the triplicate prescription. The pharmacist may dispense the triplicate prescription medication in this situation if the pharmacist is satisfied regarding the circumstance. The prescriber must forward a triplicate prescription to the pharmacist as a replacement. A copy of the triplicate should be forwarded to the CPSA as soon as possible. A copy of the regular prescription may be

attached. The TPP form is required by the CPSA as data is entered on the basis of the unique prescription number assigned to each triplicate prescription.

Occasionally, pharmacists may be required to make changes or to clarify information on the prescription. Pharmacists should write “see over” on the face of the CPSA copy of the prescription and document the changes made to the prescription on the back of the prescription. The pharmacist should document the following information:

- The date
- Action taken (contact and/or approval of prescriber, if required)
- The change or clarification
- The reason for the change (including “patient’s request”)
- The initials of the pharmacist

Pharmacists should also document any information that will clarify prescription information. This information assists TPP staff in data entry and avoids the need to call the pharmacist for clarification.

## The “Pharmacy Use Only” Section

Pharmacists must ensure that the “Pharmacy Use Only” section is completed legibly, completely and accurately as illustrated in [Appendix B](#). It is permissible to write over the watermark information guides. TPP staff is required to call the pharmacist if information is missing or incorrect in this section to ensure quality data entry.

Pharmacists must document the following in this section:

- *Date Dispensed* – The date dispensed is compared to the date issued to ensure the prescription was dispensed within the time limit for the prescription. Occasionally, a patient will request the prescription be held until it is required. The pharmacist should document this request as outlined above.
- *Rx Prescription Number* – Pharmacy assigned prescription number
- *Drug Identification Number (DIN)* – The DIN of the drug dispensed should be indicated here. The DIN is used to check against the drug and strength ordered. If the prescription is compounded, the DIN of the triplicate prescription medication component should be indicated here. If a compounding agent (e.g. powder) is used that does not have a DIN number, the pharmacist should indicate the agent used in this area. **Do not use the pseudo-DIN 999999.**
- *Quantity* – The TOTAL quantity dispensed must be noted. The quantity is verified against the quantity ordered. **Refills are not permitted and part-fills are discouraged.** Part-fills should only be accepted if the following information is specified:
  - The total quantity,
  - The amount to be dispensed each time, and
  - The time interval between fills.To document part-fills, indicate the amount dispensed over the total quantity of the prescription (e.g. 30/90). The CPSA copy should be mailed after the first part-fill is dispensed. It is not necessary to forward information on further fills.
- *Pharmacy License Number* – The pharmacy license number is used to identify the pharmacy within the database.
- *Received by* – The patient (or patient’s agent) must sign for the triplicate prescription medication upon receipt of the medication. Pharmacists should NOT ask the patient to sign the prescription before it is dispensed as the individual who delivers the prescription to the pharmacist may not be the same individual who picks up the medication.
- *Pharmacist’s Signature and Certification Number* – The pharmacist responsible for dispensing the medication is identified by their certification number.

## Lost or Stolen Triplicate Prescription Pads

Triplicate prescription pads are highly valued on the illicit street market.

A complete listing of [lost or stolen](#) triplicate prescriptions is available on the ACP website. Pharmacists should be diligent in checking every triplicate prescription against this information. Lost or stolen triplicate prescriptions can “surface” years after they were reported missing. Listings are conveniently sorted alphabetically by prescriber name.

## Mailing CPSA Triplicate Prescription Copies

**The pharmacist must forward the CPSA copy of the triplicate prescription at least weekly.** By submitting the prescription copies regularly, the database created from the information is kept up-to-date. Statistics and reports are more reliable and problems can be identified sooner.

Self-addressed envelopes are available from the Alberta College of Pharmacists. Please do not fold the forms.

Pharmacists may fill triplicate prescriptions from other provinces. These triplicate prescriptions should be mailed to the respective triplicate prescription program. The addresses for the other provincial triplicate prescription programs are provided in [Appendix C](#).

The TPP staff that enter the data for the TPP database receive a NCR copy of the prescription information which presents special challenges for data entry. Pharmacists should note the following:

- If an error is made, cross out the error and write the correct information beside it. Do not write over an error.
- Do not cover the “Pharmacy Use Section” with a pharmacy label.
- If a pharmacy label is used and placed on the back of the prescription, ensure that any further notations on the prescription transfer to the copy.
- If a pharmacy stamp is used on the back of the prescription copy, please ensure that the ink does not bleed through the copy to create an illegible prescription copy.

## Use of the Triplicate Prescription Data

On receipt of the College copy of the TPP prescription, data from the prescription is entered into a database. Reports are generated and analyzed on a monthly basis to monitor utilization rates for the TPP medications. Practitioner prescribing patterns are also monitored. Prescribers flagged by the program are sent correspondence on a monthly basis. Statistical reports are also generated to monitor utilization trends.

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**For additional information on the Triplicate Prescription Program, please contact:**

**College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta**

**Telus Plaza, South Tower**

**2700-10020 100 St NW**

**Edmonton, Alberta**

**T5J 0N3**

**Phone: (780) 423-4764**

**Toll Free: 1-800-320-8624**

Fax: (780) 420-0651

[www.cpsa.ab.ca](http://www.cpsa.ab.ca)

TPP-Information for the Pharmacist

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Appendix A

ALBERTA TRIPPLICATE PRESCRIPTION FORM			
Void after three days. Take both copies to pharmacy of choice. PLEASE PRINT			
HEALTH CARE NUMBER		DATE ISSUED	
A/B 345678900		02 01 30	
PATIENT NAME		DATE OF BIRTH	
John L. Doe		6610910	
ADDRESS		CITY	
12345-67 Street		Edmonton, AB T8A 1A1	
DRUG NAME & DOSAGE			
Demerol 50mg tablets			
QUANTITY: NUMERIC		ALPHA	
21		Twenty one	
DIRECTIONS FOR USE			
q tid			
NO SUBSTITUTE		PRESCRIBER SIGNATURE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		J. Smith	
PHARMACY NAME		PHARMACY NO.	
Smith		9876	
STREET			
Edmonton, AB T0A 0A0			
(780) 123-4567			
5313001			
PHARMACY USE ONLY			
DATE DISPENSED		RX #	
YY   MM   DD			
D.L.N.		PHARMACY LIC #	
QUANTITY			
PHARMACIST'S SIGN. & CERT. #			
PHARMACY COPY		RECEIVED BY	

Appendix B

ALBERTA TRIPPLICATE PRESCRIPTION FORM	
Void after three days. Take both copies to pharmacy of choice. PLEASE PRINT	
IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	DATE ISSUED
AB 2415678900	02 01 30
PATIENT NAME	DATE OF BIRTH
John L. Doe	660901
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE	ADDRESS
	12345-67 Street
	Edmonton, AB T8E1A7
ONLY ONE DRUG COVERAGE PER FORM	NO REFILLS PERMITTED
DRUG NAME & DOSAGE	
Demerol 50mg tablets	
QUANTITY NUMERIC	ALPHA
21	Twenty one
DIRECTIONS FOR USE	
q tid x 1/52	
NO SUBSTITUTION	PHYSICIAN SIGNATURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	J. Smith
DR JACK SMITH	9876
123 AN	
AB T8E1A7	
23-4567	
5313001	
PHARMACY USE ONLY	
DATE DISPENSED	RX #
02138018	987654
QUANTITY	PHARMACY
21	001
PHARMACIST	PHARMACY
C. McLean	4172
PHARMACY COPY	RECEIVED BY

## **Triplicate Prescription Program Addresses**

### British Columbia

Triplicate Prescription Program  
College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia  
1807 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, British Columbia V6J 2A9  
(604) 733-7758  
<http://www.cpsbc.ca/cps>

### Alberta

Triplicate Prescription Program  
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta  
Telus Plaza, South Tower  
2700-10020 100 St NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0N3  
(780) 423-4764  
[http://www.cpsa.ab.ca/collegeprograms/triplicate\\_program.asp](http://www.cpsa.ab.ca/collegeprograms/triplicate_program.asp)

### Saskatchewan

Triplicate Prescription Program  
College of Physicians and Surgeons  
211 – 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 1N1  
(306) 244-7355  
<http://www.quadrant.net/cpss/>

### Manitoba

Multiple Prescription Program  
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba  
494 St James Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 3J4  
(204) 772-4985  
<http://www.cpsm.mb.ca/>

### Nova Scotia

Prescription Monitoring Association  
PO Box 2200  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3C6  
(902) 496-7123  
<http://www.cpsns.ns.ca/>