



Triplicate Prescription Program

Information for the Prescriber

Table of Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Registration in Triplicate Program](#)
- [Triplicate Prescription Pads](#)
- [Ordering Triplicate Prescription Pads](#)
- [Locum Prescribers](#)
- [Security of Triplicate Prescription Pad](#)
- [Prescribing Triplicate Medications](#)
- [Part-Fill Prescriptions](#)
- [Accuracy and Legibility](#)
- [Faxing Triplicate Prescriptions](#)
- [Information for the Patient](#)
- [Other Prescribing Issues](#)
- [Guidelines for Provincial Border Areas](#)
- [Use of Triplicate Prescription Data](#)
- [Contact Information](#)

Introduction

In 1986, the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) established the Triplicate Prescription Program (TPP) to monitor the use of **certain drugs** prone to misuse and abuse for non-medical purposes.

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.

To prescribe **medications on the TPP**, it is **mandatory** that prescribers use the special TPP prescription forms.

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 other copy is forwarded to the CPSA on a weekly basis. Information from the triplicate prescription is entered into a database to monitor utilization.

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Registration in the Triplicate Prescription Program

Prescribers must **register** with the TPP in order to prescribe medications on the TPP list. Physicians, dentists, and veterinarians may register at any time. It is important to check the appropriate prescriber box on the form. There is no cost to prescribers to register with the program. If the prescriber is a **medical resident** please complete the specific registration form

[\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Triplicate Prescription Pads

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.** The use of home addresses on pads is not recommended for reasons of prescriber safety and security. [\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Locum Prescribers

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, the unique prescriber identification number, and a blank space instead of an address. This blank space must be filled in manually each time a prescription is issued with the following:

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

This information assists the program and pharmacists if additional information or clarification is required regarding the prescription.

Ordering Triplicate Prescription Pads

A reorder form is provided in the triplicate prescription pads. The pads can also be reordered by phone, fax or email from the CPSA. **It is important to place an order well in advance to allow for delivery (approximately two weeks).**

There are 50 prescriptions per pad. Only two pads (100 prescriptions) can be ordered at a time. At the time of registration (first time only), prescribers will only be issued one pad (50 prescriptions).

The **TPP medication list** is included on the cover of each pad. [\(Back to Contents\)](#)

Security of Triplicate Prescription Pads

Prescribers must take proper precautions to secure TPP pads at all times. Pads should only be accessible to the prescriber. Only the prescriber identified on the pad can use the pad.

Should a triplicate prescription pad be lost or stolen, the prescriber should contact the police and notify the CPSA immediately. The prescriber should provide the following information to the CPSA:

- Date of loss or theft,
- Serial number(s) of missing pad(s),
- Name of the last patient prescribed a triplicate prescription, and
- The police file number and the investigating Constable's name and phone number.

This information is entered onto Alberta College of Pharmacists web site (password protected) that the pharmacist can access. A pharmacist can immediately contact the police if an attempt is made to obtain medications using a lost or stolen triplicate prescription.

When a physician retires or leaves the province, unused portions of the pads must be returned to the CPSA for proper destruction. ([Back to Contents](#))

Prescribing Triplicate Prescription Medication

The following information must appear on each prescription:

- Date – Prescriptions are only valid for three days (72 hours) from the date prescribed.
- Patient's AHCIP 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 x 30 days supply
- Two prescriptions should be issued – one for MS Contin 100mg (90 tablets) and one for MS Contin 15mg (90 tablets)
- 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 months 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. ([Back to Contents](#))

Part-Fill Prescriptions

Refills will not be honored. The CPSA discourages part-fills as a method to provide patients with large quantities of a drug over extended periods of time. Part-fills will 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. ([Back to Contents](#))

Accuracy and Legibility

All sections of the prescription must be filled out completely and accurately. Failure to do this may result in false data entry. Also, if information is missing or incorrect, the prescriber may be called for the correct information. This lack of information results in lost time and inconvenience for all parties.

The prescription must be legible. The prescriber can print or type the information, if necessary. The prescriber should press hard when writing to ensure all three copies are legible. The top two copies are given to the patient. The prescriber should file the bottom copy on the patient's chart. Prescriber copies of triplicate prescriptions must be retained for ten years. ([Back to Contents](#))

Faxing Triplicate Prescriptions

A TPP prescription may be faxed following guidelines provided the TPP form is used. Data is entered based on the unique prescription number assigned to each triplicate prescription form. ([Back to Contents](#))

Information for the Patient

Prescribers should stress the following to patients when providing triplicate prescriptions:

- Both copies of the prescription must be presented to the pharmacist (unless faxed).
- The patient must present the prescription within three days (72 hours) of the prescribing date. If the patient fails to present the prescription within three days (72 hours), the prescription becomes void and the patient will be asked to obtain a new triplicate prescription.
- The patient will be asked to sign the triplicate prescription at the time they pick up the medication. A patient's agent may present and sign for a prescription once the pharmacist verifies their identity. ([Back to Contents](#))

Other Prescribing Issues

Prescribers should note the following regarding the Triplicate Prescription Program:

- Pharmacists will NOT fill prescriptions for triplicate prescription medications issued on regular prescription pads.
- Verbal orders for triplicate prescription medications are NOT permitted.
- Prescribers can only use their own personalized TPP pad. It is unacceptable to lend, exchange or borrow another prescriber's triplicate prescription pad. The use of another prescriber's pad can result in incorrect data entry by the CPSA.
- To prescribe methadone, physicians must obtain special prescribing authorization. Contact the CPSA office for more information.
- Physicians should refrain from prescribing non-triplicate prescription medications on the TPP prescription forms. The printing of the forms is costly and the database does not accommodate entry of these medications. ([Back to Contents](#))

Guidelines for Provincial Border Areas

In Alberta/Saskatchewan border areas (for example, Lloydminster), the following guidelines apply:

- Regardless of a patient's residence, Alberta-based prescribers should use the Alberta-based program, while Saskatchewan prescribers should use the Saskatchewan-based program.
- If the prescriber is licensed in both provinces, he or she can register in both provinces' triplicate prescription programs. In this case, the prescriber must use a Saskatchewan TPP prescription for Saskatchewan residents, and an Alberta TPP prescription for Alberta residents. Pharmacists will then forward the College copy of the triplicate prescription to their respective provincial program.
- The prescriber should note that the list of triplicate prescriptions differs between the provinces. ([Back to Contents](#))

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. Prescriber prescribing patterns are also monitored. Statistical reports are also maintained.

On occasion, prescribers may receive different kinds of correspondence related to the program. Prescribers will receive correspondence from their respective licensing body.

Prescribers will receive a regular letter if a patient has received TPP medications from three or more prescribers within a three-month period. This letter is for the information of the prescribers involved in order to optimize patient care. A response to the letter is not required.

Special letters are sent to prescribers when prescribing patterns are seen as unusual for a given patient. The primary prescriber is required to respond to the letter by providing a rationale for the prescribing patterns identified. This request is not intended to suggest that prescribing is inappropriate.

Prescribers may also receive cancer letters from the CPSA. When prescribing patterns suggest a cancer diagnosis, the primary prescriber is asked to complete and return the accompanying forms to verify the diagnosis.

Update letters are sent when unusual prescribing patterns are persistently flagged for a given patient. If the information regarding the prescribing rationale is not up-to-date, a request is made for updated information on the patient's condition and treatment plan.

Prescribers are encouraged to contact the CPSA at any time to obtain information from the database. To preserve confidentiality, staff will only verify information during phone calls. However, prescribers can request information to be faxed or mailed to them. ([Back to Contents](#))

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
Email: TPPinfo@cpsa.ab.ca**