D3: Technician:
OTCs for CPhTs
3:00pm - 4:00pm

ACPE UAN 107-000-13-023-L01-T 0.1 CEU/1.0 Hr
Activity Type: Knowledge-Based

Learning Objectives for Technicians: Upon completion of this CPE activity participants should be able to:
1. Describe the role of technicians in response to patients’ questions regarding over the counter medications
2. Identify the most common classes of over the counter medications
3. Discuss the restrictions of non-prescription medications kept behind the pharmacy counter
4. Properly identify and describe the components of over the counter medication labels
5. Discuss the reasons for over the counter product recalls and products that have labeling or dosing changes required

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Speaker Disclosure: Emma Kraayenbrink reports no actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to this CPE activity. Off-label use of medications will not be discussed during this presentation.
OTCs for CPhTs

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Faculty Disclosure
- Emma Kraayenbrink reports she does not have actual or potential conflicts of interest associated with this presentation.
- Emma Kraayenbrink has indicated that off-label use of medication will not be discussed during this presentation.

Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this activity, pharmacy technicians should be able to:
1. Describe role of technicians in response to patients' questions regarding over the counter medications
2. Identify the most common classes of over the counter medications
3. Properly identify and describe the components of over the counter medication labels
4. Discuss the restrictions on non-prescription medications kept behind the pharmacy counter
5. Discuss the reasons for over the counter product recalls and products that have labeling or dosing changes required
Personal Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this activity, I would like to be able to:

1. 
2. 
3. 

Pre-Assessment Questions

1. A pharmacy technician may counsel a patient on an OTC product, provided that the pharmacist has already recommended the product to the patient. True or False?
2. What information must be included on an OTC medication label?
3. Cheratussin may be sold without a prescription. True or False?

Over the Counter Medications

• According to a 2002 survey, 59% of Americans had taken at least one nonprescription medication in the past 6 months
• Definition:
  • Over-the-Counter (OTC) products are sold without a doctor’s prescription and can be purchased off the shelf in stores
  • Products are regulated by the FDA to ensure acceptable ingredients, doses, formulations, and labeling
Over the Counter Medications

- According to the FDA, OTC products generally have these characteristics:
  - Their benefits outweigh their risks
  - The potential for misuse and abuse is low
  - Consumer can use them for self-diagnosed conditions
  - They can be adequately labeled
  - Health practitioners are not needed for the safe and effective use of the product

Choosing OTC products

- Patients come into the pharmacy daily looking for suggestions or guidance on selecting the best OTC item for their ailment
- As a technician, how can you help?
- What can you say?
- What can you do?
- What can you NOT do?

Technician’s Role

From the Iowa Administrative Code:
657–3.23 (155A) Tasks a pharmacy technician shall not perform. A pharmacy technician shall not be authorized to perform any of the following judgmental tasks:
- 3. Provide patient counseling, consultation, or patient-specific drug information, tender an offer of patient counseling on behalf of a pharmacist, or accept a refusal of patient counseling from a patient or patient’s agent;
- 4. Make decisions that require a pharmacist’s professional judgment, such as interpreting prescription drug orders or applying information;
Handling OTC Questions

- "Provide patient counseling, consultation, or patient-specific drug information" does not necessarily apply only to prescription drugs
- Also includes information specific to over the counter medications
- So how do you handle questions about OTCs?
- What sorts of questions can you/can you not answer or help the patient with?
- Learn how to "triage" patient questions and concerns regarding OTC products to alleviate some of the stress and demands placed on the pharmacist

Gathering Information

- Technicians may gather information from the patient who is looking for help choosing an OTC product
- Important questions to remember:
  - Who is this product for?
    - Remember: if it is for a child, ALWAYS get age and weight!
  - If it is for a woman: are they pregnant or breastfeeding?
  - What symptoms are you experiencing? How long?
  - What other medications/disease states do you have?
  - Anything that makes symptoms worse or better?
  - What other products have you used in the past?

Handling OTC Questions

Scenario:
A mother approaches you at the pharmacy counter and hands you an empty bottle of children's ibuprofen liquid. She says that she has just used the last drop and asks you to help her find another bottle for her 18-month old daughter. What do you do?
Handling OTC Questions

- **A.** Ask the pharmacist to show the mother where the ibuprofen is located
- **B.** Show the mother yourself where the ibuprofen is and then ask the pharmacist to double check that you have grabbed the same product she was looking for
- **C.** Point to the children’s medication section and tell her it should be over there somewhere
- **D.** Ask her how much child weighs so you can dose the ibuprofen for her to ensure that she has the correct dosage

**BEST answer is B**

**Why?**

- It is appropriate for technicians to help a patient find a product that they are looking for, or need help locating in the store
- Should verify with the pharmacists after you have selected the product that it is in fact the correct one
- Pharmacist may assess for appropriateness or dosage for patient—not technician

**Scenario:**
An older gentleman comes up to you while you are working at the counter and tells you that he has a stuffy nose and itchy, red, watery eyes. He says that he isn’t coughing but his head feels so congested and “foggy.” He’d like to know if there is anything you can recommend for him. What do you do?
Handling OTC Questions

- A. Gather more information about his symptoms and other medications and disease states and show him the antihistamine and decongestant products
- B. Tell him that he probably needs to make an appointment with his doctor to get a prescription
- C. Ask him to wait while you relay the information to the pharmacist, who will help him find an appropriate product.
- D. Tell him it sounds like he just needs to drink lots of fluids and get some rest

Best answer is C

Technician may gather information about patients symptoms, disease states and other medications

Good idea to write information down or jot notes for pharmacist, in case you can’t verbally relay information at that moment

Therapeutic recommendation must be made by the pharmacist

Handling OTC Questions

Scenario:
- A woman carrying 2 bottles comes up to you at the counter. “I’m having really bad heartburn,” she says. “Which one of these products do you use when you have heartburn?” She holds up a bottle Pepcid and a bottle of Prilosec OTC. What do you say?
Handling OTC Questions

- **A.** Tell her that you always prefer Tums to either of those products
- **B.** Tell her they both work equally well and it's up to her whichever she wants to buy
- **C.** The Pepcid is cheaper, so go with that
- **D.** Politely tell her that what works for you might not always work for her, given other medications and disease states. It's best if the pharmacist looks through your profile to determine the best choice.

The BEST answer is: **D**

Can be a “gray” area

It can be hard not to give personal recommendations “Well, I like to use…”

Always need to consider disease states, other meds, etc.

Let the pharmacist make the determination to ensure the patient is using the product correctly and safely

Common OTC Classes

- According to the American Pharmacist Association, the most commonly used classes of OTC products are:
  - Analgesics (pain relievers)
  - Cough and cold
  - Allergy and sinus
  - Heartburn and indigestion
  - Constipation and diarrhea
Analgesics
- Pain relievers used to treat headaches, muscle aches/sprains, cramps, etc.
- Also used as fever reducers (antipyretics)
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- NSAIDs:
  - Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)
  - Naproxen (Aleve)
  - Also decreases inflammation
- Aspirin (Bayer, Bufferin)
- Combinations
  - Acetaminophen, aspirin, caffeine (Excedrin Migraine)

Cough and Cold
- Two main categories of cough and cold products
- *Expectorants*: loosen mucus to be easily coughed up
  - Guiafenesin (Mucinex)
- *Cough suppressants*: suppress cough
  - Dextromethorphan (Delsym, Robitussin)
- Combinations
  - Guiafenesin/dextromethorphan (Mucinex DM, Tussin DM)
- Also topical products
  - Mentholatum ointment (Vick’s VapoRub)
  - Lozenges (Halls, Cepacol, Vick’s, etc.)

Allergy and Sinus
- Antihistamines used to treat allergy symptoms such as itchy, watery eyes and runny nose
  - 1st generation (older)
    - Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
    - Chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton)
  - 2nd generation (newer)
    - Loratidine (Claritin)
    - Cetirizine (Zyrtec)
    - Fexofenadine (Allegra)
Allergy and Sinus

- Decongestants relieve nasal congestion and "stuffiness"

- Oral products:
  - Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed)
  - Phenylephrine (Sudafed PE)

- Topical products (nasal spray):
  - Oxymetazoline (Afrin)

- Other decongestants are used in eye drops to relieve redness

Heartburn and Indigestion

- Used to decrease or neutralize stomach acid

- Antacids
  - Calcium carbonate (Tums, Rolaid)
  - Aluminum/Magnesium products (Maalox, Mylanta, Gaviscon)

- H2 blockers
  - Ranitidine (Zantac)
  - Famotidine (Pepcid)
  - Cimetidine (Tagament)

Heartburn and Indigestion

- PPIs
  - Omeprazole (Prilosec OTC)
  - Lansoprazole (Prevacid OTC)

- For upset/sour stomach, nausea or indigestion
- Bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol, Kaopectate)
  - Also used for diarrhea
  - Sodium bicarbonate (Alka-Seltzer)
Constipation and Diarrhea

- Three main types of laxatives:
  - Bulk-forming or fiber
    - Metamucil, Benefiber, Citrucel
  - Osmotic
    - Milk of Magnesia (Philip’s)
    - PEG (Miralax)
  - Stimulant
    - Bisacodyl (Dulcolax)
    - Sennosides (Senokot)

- Stool softeners are gentler, not laxatives
  - Docusate (Colace)

- Anti-diarrheals for symptomatic relief only
  - Bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol, Kaopectate)
  - Loperamide (Imodium)

OTC Labeling

- As of April, 2012 new FDA regulations require uniform labeling of OTC products
- Information on all products are listed in the same order, arranged in a simpler, consistent style and contain easier words for consumers to understand
- Uniform labels tell you:
  - What the medication is
  - What it is used for
  - How to take it
  - Side effects
  - Warnings (who should/shouldn’t take the medication)
OTC Labeling

- **Active Ingredients**: therapeutic substances (the drug)
- **Purpose**: class or category of medication (such as antihistamine, antacid, or cough suppressant)
- **Uses**: symptoms or diseases the product will treat or prevent
- **Warnings**: when not to use the product, when to stop taking it, when to see a doctor, possible side effects

- **Directions**: how much to take, how to take it, how long to take it
- **Other information**: storage information
- **Inactive Ingredients**: substances such as binders, colors, or flavoring
  - Useful if patients have allergies, sensitivities
  - Lactose, gluten, dyes, etc.
New Acetaminophen Labeling

- As of July, 2011 infant concentrated APAP drops are being phased out and replaced with a less concentrated liquid
- One concentration of infant/children's APAP eliminates potential for dosing error
- Less concentrated liquid means less chance of accidental overdose

New Acetaminophen Labeling

- The new infant's APAP has the same concentration as the children's liquid
- Old infant drops were 80mg/0.8mL
- New formula is 160mg/5mL
- Just one concentration and one set of dosing instructions
- Concentrated drops are still safe to use, but be sure to ALWAYS use child's correct weight

New Acetaminophen Labeling

- Read label CAREFULLY
- Different dosing device
- Dropper vs. oral syringe
- Use the device that came with the medication
OTC Restrictions

- There are a handful of medications that have “OTC" status but are subject to sale restrictions
- Examples include:
  - Pseudoephedrine & ephedrine
  - Plan B Emergency Contraception
  - Some schedule V items (Cheratussin)

Pseudoephedrine

- Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005 regulates the sale of methamphetamine precursors substances such as pseudoephedrine and epinephrine
- Daily purchase limit of 3.6g and 30-day limit of 7.5g
- Must also keep records of purchasers name, address and proof of identity (driver's license)

- Products kept out of direct customer access
- May exceed daily/monthly purchase limits with a doctors prescription
- Includes pseudoephedrine containing products labeled “D” (Claritin-D, Zyrtec-D, Mucinex-D)
Plan B Emergency Contraception

- Plan B: 2 tablets levonorgestrel 750mcg separated by 12 hours
- Plan B OneStep: 1.5mg levonorgestrel
- May prevent pregnancy when taken within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse

Plan B Emergency Contraception

- Sold without a prescription to women 17 years and older
- Prescription needed for girls under 17 years old
- Can also be sold to men, provided that they show appropriate ID
- Restricted access also allows for proper counseling by the pharmacist

Codeine Cough Syrups

- Cheratussin AC schedule V substance
- Each 5mL contains 10mg codeine (opiate)
- Up to 4 oz. can be purchased within a 48 hour period without a prescription
**Codeine Cough Syrups**

- Purchaser must be at least 18 years old, show proper identification and sign a log book
- Many states still prohibit sale without prescription
- Pharmacists may use discretion and decline to sell the drug without prescription
  - Even some pharmacies

**Product Recalls**

- January, 2012: Select bottles of Excedrin, No-Doz, Bufferin and Gas-X because products may contain stray tablets or capsules from other medications or contain broken or chipped tablets
- 2011: Select bottles of Benadryl, Sudafed-PE and Tylenol products due to insufficient cleaning procedures at the manufacturing plant

**Product Recalls**

- 2010: Select Rolaids products recalled due to trace amounts of wood and metal particles found in the product
- 2010: Select bottles of Benadryl, Motrin and Tylenol products due to a musty or moldy odor that was linked to trace amounts of a chemical called tribromoanisole
- As of Dec. 2012, Tylenol and Excedrin products are still not available
Product Recalls

- Beginning in 2012, sale Primatene Mist Inhalers (available behind the counter) were banned
- Contained chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) which were found to be harmful to the ozone layer
- Manufacturer is developing a CFC-free formula to be more environmentally friendly and perhaps return to shelves

Questions?

For more Information

- Iowa Law Manual, online:
  - http://www.state.ia.us/ibpe/rules_laws/index.html
- FDA’s website (Information of Consumers)
  - www.fda.gov
- Handbook of Non-Prescription Drugs; An Interactive Approach to Self-Care, 17th ed.
- Pharmacy Times OTC Guide
  - www.otcguide.net
Post-Assessment Questions

1. **True or False**: A pharmacy technician may counsel a patient on an OTC product, provided that the pharmacist has already recommended the product to the patient?

2. Which of the following is a commonly used OTC antihistamine?
   - a. loperamide
   - b. diphenhydramine
   - c. pseudoephedrine
   - d. oxymetazoline

3. **True or False**: New infant/children’s acetaminophen labeling and dosing were designed to decrease the chance of accidental overdose?

4. Which of the following OTC products is subject to sales restrictions and kept behind the counter?
   - a. Sudafed-PE
   - b. Mucinex
   - c. Primatene Inhaler
   - d. Claritin-D

5. Which of the following is a mandatory component on OTC labels?
   - a. alternative products
   - b. directions
   - c. drug’s mechanism of action
   - d. how the drug is metabolized
Post-Assessment Questions

1. A pharmacy technician may counsel a patient on an OTC product, provided that the pharmacist has already recommended the product to the patient?
   A. True
   B. False

2. Which of the following is a commonly used OTC antihistamine?
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   C. pseudoephedrine
   D. oxymetazoline

3. New infant/children’s acetaminophen labeling and dosing were designed to decrease the chance of accidental overdose?
   A. True
   B. False

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