



PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW IN CASE OF A DISPENSING ERROR



Updated April 2010

- 1 When presented with a complaint, ensure the matter is handled by the pharmacist.
- 2 Show concern and willingness to correct any error.
- 3 Check out the alleged error and if established, replace the offending item immediately. Do not charge for the replacement. If it was dispensed at another pharmacy, check with that pharmacy and replace if possible. Take care not to compound the problem. Retain the evidence if possible.
- 4 An apology couched in the correct way will **not** constitute an admission of liability. You should use either of the following two examples which are ways of apologising without admitting liability: *"I am sorry this has happened"; "I know this has caused you great pain/distress/anxiety."*
- 5 Determine whether any of the wrong drug has been used, or medication missed. Has any harm been suffered? Has any expense been incurred?
DO NOT OFFER COMPENSATION - This may be regarded as an attempt to bribe your way out of trouble.
DO NOT mention your insurance cover or the Pharmacy Board, as this will only sow the seeds of opportunity.
- 6 Show empathy with the patient. This gives them the opportunity to vent their feelings so you might learn where you truly stand.
- 7 At all times remain calm, sympathetic and co-operative. Advise that you will investigate how this occurred and take action to tighten procedures. Obtain a phone number and show an ongoing interest in the welfare of the patient.
- 8 Telephone PDL and report the problem. You will be advised what further action to take. It is important that you report any incident where the wrong drug or wrong dose has been ingested, as a claim could be lodged at some future date.
- 9 Record the details and patient history and all relevant information in your diary. These notes may be extremely important in any subsequent defence of a claim.
- 10 If after the patient has left the pharmacy, you suspect that an error has been made, act speedily to correct the problem, without causing any unnecessary alarm.
- 11 When a complaint is initiated by correspondence it is MOST IMPORTANT that you do not reply without first asking advice from PDL. Do not put anything in writing without advice from PDL.
- 12 If confronted by an investigating officer seeking information relating to drugs dispensed for a patient who has died or whose health has been compromised, it is recommended that PDL be contacted immediately so that legal advice can be provided.
- 13 When any incident occurs contact the prescriber as a matter of professional courtesy.

Phone PDL 1300 854 838