

Introduction to Pharmacy

Obj. 8.1: Identify the roles pharmacists and pharmacy technicians play in providing health care.



A Career in Pharmacy

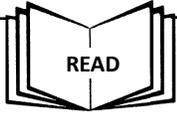
Watch the video “Love Your Job! Careers in Health-System Pharmacy” (Run Time: 7:40) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SANWMoTXY-k>) and answer the questions below:

1. How has the Pharmacy role changed over the years?
2. What are some examples of different roles Pharmacists play?
3. What are issues Pharmacists consider before giving patients medicine?
4. Why do you think Pharmacists roles may change over time? (*think about why they have changed and what may cause them to change in the future*)

DISCUSS

Challenges and Rewards

1. What do you think the **challenges** of a career in pharmacy or as a pharmacy technician might be?
2. What about the **rewards**?
3. Would *you* be interested in these careers? Why or why not?
4. What questions do you have about a career in Pharmacy?



The Role of Pharmacy

A long time ago, pharmacists were in charge of making medicines. They worked to make medicines safe, taste palatable, work well in the body to treat disease, and be given in the appropriate dosages. A person with a disease might visit the pharmacist who would determine what kind of medicine the patient needed, make and dispense it, and send the patient on her way. A few centuries ago, Pharmacy and Medicine began to demarcate roles and the pharmacy profession shifted. Later on, with the new technologies and research of the 19th and 20th centuries came even newer roles. In the late 19th century, the pharmaceutical industry was born. Pharmacists role in making medicines was diminished and their job as a dispenser and educator was promoted. Medication Therapy Management (MTM), medical care focused on optimizing drug therapy outcomes, was introduced and the practice was included in legislation in 2003. In the past few decades, pharmacies have also increasingly become a common place for the public to get vaccinated, especially with seasonal flu shots.

With a growing senior population in the United States, drug discovery and manufacturing proliferating, an exploding demand for medications as more and more diseases become treatable, and the threat of medical malpractice lawsuits due to unforeseen drug interactions, the role of the pharmacist is still shifting and expanding. Unfortunately, the public perception of the pharmacy profession is often inaccurate. What the public “sees” is usually based on commercial community pharmacies and the sometimes limited interactions that occur at the counter. This may lead to the mistaken belief that all pharmacists do is count pills, stick labels on, and sell medications to customers. In reality, pharmacists often provide essential information to patients, help doctors catch errors and optimize treatments, and help patients with complex medication therapies manage their medical life. These are some of the most important parts of pharmacist’s jobs.

With the future of healthcare in our country expanding, the reality of more prescriptions, limited pharmacists, and more patients will require the pharmacy profession to continue to grow. Automation in pharmacy, the automatic dispensing of medications using computerized machines, promises to free up pharmacists for the challenging and important work of counseling with patients. Computerization of records and medication therapy algorithms increasingly allows checking of errors to reduce mistakes commonly made in the past (i.e. bad handwriting or a dangerous interaction with an uncommon drug). The expansion of the pharmacy professions repertoire of roles with the growth of the pharmacy technician (often called Pharm Tech) job has also helped to improve the ability of pharmacy to meet patients’ needs. Ultimately, only time will tell where the pharmacy profession is headed and how much impact it can make in improving health. But so far, the signs point in a positive direction.



Pharmacist VS. Pharm Tech

Review the differing, but complementary roles of the pharmacist and pharmacy technician:

Pharmacist	Pharmacy Technician
<p>DESCRIPTION: An integrated member of the healthcare team directly involved in patient care. Pharmacists undergo extended training (typically up to four years after college) and are trained in biochemical mechanisms of action of drugs, uses for drugs, side effects, and possible drug interactions.</p> <p>ROLES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsel patients about their prescriptions • Contact physician (doctor) if information on prescription is wrong • Give vaccinations • Explain how to use the medication/device • Educate patient about common side effects • Educate patient about negative drug interactions 	<p>DESCRIPTION: A paraprofessional assistant to the pharmacist (typically requiring 1-2 years of postsecondary school) who helps with mechanical preparation of medication for dispensing to patients; interprets prescription orders, prepares medications and checks work of other technicians</p> <p>ROLES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist pharmacists • Fill prescriptions • Read physicians order • Enter information into computer • Place drugs into containers • Affix labels • Give completed materials to pharmacist for checking



Pharmacist or Pharm Tech?

In each of the scenarios below, identify whether the person is more likely a **pharmacist** or a **pharmacy technician**.

1. Arturo goes to the local CVS because he has an infection, and his doctor prescribed some medication. When he approaches the counter, he is met by a woman in a white coat who asks him several questions about whether he has any other medical problems. When Arturo responds that he has Asthma, the woman behind the counter asks him several additional questions and then explains exactly how and when Arturo should take the medication. What is the role of the woman behind the counter?
2. Jack works at the local Walgreens. His job is to fill the bottles with pills and put the correct label on the bottles. What is his role?
3. During November through January, Lisa is very busy giving flu shots and vaccinations. What is Lisa's role?
4. Maya goes to the pharmacy at Jewel to complain about some of the side effects she's been getting from her medication. She begins talking to Jim, but when Jim understands the problem, he tells her to hold on and that he needs to get Janice. What is Janice's role? What is Jim's role?



Summarize:

Complete each sentence by describing the role of each member of the pharmacy team:

1. A day on the job of a **pharmacist** might involve...

2. A day on the job of a **pharmacy technician** might involve...



Pharmacist vs. Pharm Tech Scenarios

Write **TWO** short scenarios about a pharmacist and **TWO** short scenarios about a pharmacy technician. However, do NOT write whether the people in your scenarios are pharmacists or technicians. You will be giving your scenarios to a classmate to test their knowledge, so write the answers on a SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER. Use the following steps to help you.

1. Choose the name of your character.
2. Decide if he/she will be a pharmacist or a technician.
3. Decide which activities (i.e., counting pills, labeling bottles, counseling patients) he/she will do in your scenario.
4. Write the scenario.

Scenario #1:
Scenario #2:
Scenario #3:
Scenario #4: