وزاره التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
جامعه الزهراء للبنات
كليه التقنيات الصحية والطبية –قسم الليزر والتجميل

Familiarization with Drug Labels and Prescription Terminology

Week 1-practical lecture

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Learning Objectives

1-Identify the essential information found on a medicine label.

2-distinguish generic names, brand names, strength, and dosage forms.

3-Interpret common prescription abbreviations and terminology.

4-Understand dose, route, frequency, duration, and storage instructions.

5Translate a prescription into clear directions for the patient.

6-Recognize common medication-safety points when reading prescriptions.

1. Drug Label

A drug label provides essential information for safe and correct use.

Generic name — the standardized name of the active drug.

Brand name — the commercial name given by the manufacturer.

Strength — the amount of active ingredient per dosage unit or volume.

Dosage form — tablet, capsule, syrup, injection, cream, drops, etc.

Route of administration — oral, intravenous, intramuscular, topical, etc.

Batch/Lot number and expiry date — important for traceability and safety.

Storage conditions — e.g., room temperature or refrigerated storage.

Reading a Drug Label: Example

Label information	Example	What it tells us
Generic name	Paracetamol	Active drug
Strength	500 mg	Amount in each tablet
Dosage form	Tablet	Physical pharmaceutical form
Route	Oral	How the medicine is administered
Expiry date	09/2028	Last date for use under stated conditions
Storage	Store below 25°C	Required storage condition

2. Prescription

A prescription communicates the prescriber’s instructions for medication use.

Patient information — name, age, and other relevant details.

Date of prescription.

Rx — traditional symbol indicating a prescription.

Drug name and strength.

Dosage form and quantity to dispense.

Sig. / Signa — directions for the patient.

Refills or other instructions, when applicable.

Prescriber identification and signature, according to local requirements.

3. Common Prescription Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning	Patient-friendly interpretation
PO	Per os	By mouth / orally
BID	Bis in die	Twice daily
TID	Ter in die	Three times daily
QID	Quater in die	Four times daily
QD	Once daily	Once daily
PRN	Pro re nata	As needed
STAT	Statim	Immediately
HS	Hora somni	At bedtime

4. Routes and Timing Instructions

Term	Meaning
IV	Intravenous — into a vein
IM	Intramuscular — into a muscle
SC / SQ	Subcutaneous — under the skin
SL	Sublingual — under the tongue
Topical	Applied to the skin or affected area
AC	Before meals
PC	After meals
HS	At bedtime

5. Practical Prescription Example

Amoxicillin 500 mg capsule

Sig: Take 1 capsule PO TID for 7 days.

Drug: Amoxicillin

Strength: 500 mg

Dosage form: Capsule

Dose: 1 capsule per administration

Route: PO (by mouth)

Frequency: TID (three times daily)

Duration: 7 days

PRESCRIPTION

Patient Name: Sara Ahmed

Age: 25 years

Sex: Female

Date: 26 / 09 / 2026

Diagnosis: Acute upper respiratory tract infection

Rx:

1. Paracetamol 500 mg tablets

Sig: Take 1 tablet orally every 6–8 hours when needed for fever or pain.

Dispense: 20 tablets

2. Cetirizine 10 mg tablets

Sig: Take 1 tablet orally once daily at bedtime.

Dispense: 10 tablets

3. Saline nasal spray 0.65%

Sig: 2 sprays into each nostril 3 times daily.

Dispense: 1 bottle

6. Converting a Prescription into Patient Directions

Prescription language: Take 1 capsule PO TID for 7 days(homework).

7. Medication Safety Points

Check the patient, drug, strength, dosage form, route, dose, frequency, and duration.

Check allergies and relevant contraindications when information is available.

Confirm unclear, incomplete, or potentially ambiguous prescriptions before dispensing.

Check expiry date and storage requirements.

Use clear patient instructions and verify understanding.

Be cautious with abbreviations that can be misread; follow institutional/local standards.

8. Practical Exercises

Exercise 1: Identify the generic name, brand name, strength, and dosage form from a medicine package.

Exercise 2: Interpret: “Take 1 tablet PO BID for 5 days.”

Exercise 3: Interpret: “Apply topically BID PRN.”

Exercise 4: Identify the route: IV, IM, SC, SL, and PO.

Exercise 5: Rewrite an abbreviated prescription as clear patient instructions.

Quick Review

Question	Answer
What is the generic name?	The standardized name of the active drug.
What does strength mean?	Amount of active ingredient per unit or volume.
What does PO mean?	By mouth / orally.
What does BID mean?	Twice daily.
What does PRN mean?	As needed.
What is Sig.?	Directions for use.
Why check expiry and storage?	To support medication quality and safety.

Key Take-Home Messages

A drug label tells us what the medicine is and provides important safety information.

A prescription tells us what to dispense and how the medicine should be used.

Always interpret drug name, strength, dosage form, route, dose, frequency, and duration.

Translate technical abbreviations into clear instructions for patients.

When a prescription is unclear, clarify it before dispensing.