



Health Career Directory

Pharmacist

Hospital and community pharmacists now focus primarily on providing patients with Pharmaceutical Care. This is a collaborative process. It is a process where pharmacists recognize patient needs and then give patients medication that will improve their medical condition. A Pharmacists' goal during this process is to have a minimal negative impact on patient's quality of life.

Trained pharmacy assistants and technicians now prepare and dispense most medications. Pharmacists, however, focus on disease assessment, medication management, and patient care. The internet has increased the amount of drug-related information available to the public.

This has created more educated consumers and patients. Pharmacists are often asked to check information and need to answer many detailed questions about different treatments and medications.

Technological advancements are leading to increased automation. This further reduces the amount of time pharmacists spend preparing and dispensing medications.

Main roles and responsibilities

Pharmacists may perform some or all of the following duties:

- check prescriptions to determine if the medication is right for the patient
- counsel patients on the correct use of medication and what to expect
- follow up and monitor the patient
- prepare and give out prescribed medicines by measuring, mixing and calculating appropriate quantities of drugs and other chemicals
- dispense prescribed pharmaceuticals to customers or to other health care professionals. advise them on indications, contra-indications, adverse effects, drug interactions and dosage
- identify, solve, and give advice about drug related problems
- set therapeutic goals with patients
- optimize dosing programs for patients. Work with doctors to change patients from intravenous medications to oral medications
- conduct drug utilization evaluations
- maintain patient health and medication records
- report adverse drug reactions to Health Canada
- train and supervise pharmacy technicians about how to properly handle and prepare pharmaceutical products
- order and maintain stock of pharmaceutical supplies
- develop new drugs and research their effects
- keep up to date on information regarding new drugs, forms of treatment, and regulatory issues
- may advise government and health organizations on drug related policies and legislation
- may supervise and co-ordinate the activities of other pharmacists, pharmacy assistants, pharmacy technicians, and other staff.

Special Duties

Community Pharmacists

Community pharmacists work in retail pharmacies and are the most common type of pharmacist. These pharmacists provide pharmaceutical care by filling prescriptions and solving drug-related problems for the general public. They are the most widely available health professionals to the public for health concerns and questions. Community pharmacists interact with patients and explain the use of prescribed drugs. In addition, they can help in the selection of non-prescription drugs and provide other services such as immunizations or disease screening

Hospital Pharmacists

Hospital pharmacists often provide drugs for more advanced forms of medical treatment and may work with more toxic medicines. These pharmacists work closely with other health care professionals. They act as the medication expert in order to provide the best care possible. Hospital pharmacists can also participate in patient and staff education, clinics for certain diseases or clinical research

Industrial Pharmacists

Industrial pharmacists research and develop new drugs. These pharmacists organize different types of clinical and non-clinical tests during the development of new drugs. They provide quality control services during the manufacturing of drug products to make sure they meet potency, purity, uniformity, stability and safety standards. Industrial pharmacists may also be involved in the promotion of pharmaceutical products. They may also participate in development of informational materials for other health care professionals, other pharmacists, and the general public.

Who is suited to become a pharmacist?

Pharmacists are most effective when they have the following skills and characteristics:

- a genuine interest in providing clinical care for people from all walks of life
- good communication skills
- thoughtfulness and good judgement
- precise work habits and the ability to work under pressure
- a high degree of integrity
- good manual dexterity
- strong mathematical and computer skills
- strong ethical sense
- a desire to keep up to date with new ideas and advances in the pharmaceutical sciences
- the ability to work independently, make decisions, and solve problems.

They should enjoy tasks requiring exactness and organized methods, synthesizing information and solving problems, and directing and instructing pharmacy staff.

Who employs pharmacists?

Pharmacists work in hospitals and community settings for the health authorities/employers in BC. Some pharmacists work for universities, government and pharmaceutical companies. The majority of the pharmacists work in retail pharmacies. These include privately owned and operated pharmacies, national chains, and pharmacies located in super markets and big box stores.

Most pharmacists work approximately 40 to 50 hours per week. However, pharmacists may need to work longer hours if they are self-employed or if they work in locations that are short on staff.

Part-time employment is possible for pharmacists

Pharmacists work in a professional environment that requires pharmacist-patient confidentiality. They spend the majority of their work day standing, which could result in back stress. The preparation of medicines can be meticulous work because it involves measuring out small quantities of hazardous compounds and conducting calculations.

This work may require pharmacists to wear safety goggles, aprons, and gloves, and to use fume hoods. Pharmacists must always stay alert in order to maintain a safe working environment and to ensure patient safety through the proper preparation of medications.

Required training & education to become pharmacists:

New workers entering this occupational group need to have finished a bachelor's degree in pharmacy.

Individuals must also pass a board examination administered by the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada.

As well, all new pharmacists must pass an English Language Fluency exam in order to practice pharmacy in BC

Before becoming fully licensed, pharmacists must have 800 hours of practical experience through an intern or apprentice program. The practical requirements may be lessened to 160 or 500 hours for formally licensed pharmacists who had left the industry and are applying to be re-licensed. Practical requirements may also be less for pharmacists who immigrate to British Columbia from other countries.

The University of British Columbia's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences includes a clerkship program as part of its degree requirements. In this clerkship program, students work for 20 weeks in the pharmaceutical industry under the direction of a licensed pharmacist.

Due to the risk of coming in contact with hazardous chemical compounds, pharmacists must take work-place hazardous materials information systems training (WHMIS). First aid and advanced cardiac life support certifications are helpful, but are not required.

Retail pharmacists who plan to start their own practices often take accounting and other business courses.

Workers already licensed or certified in another province or territory in a provincially regulated occupation will have their credentials recognized in BC

For program information on public post-secondary education in BC please see the Education Planner website at: <http://www.educationplanner.ca/>

Residency Training is required for hospital pharmacists. For information on Pharm D program go to: <http://www.pharmacy.ubc.ca/programs/degree-programs/PharmD>

More Information about becoming a Pharmacist in Canada:

The Canadian Pharmacists Association (CPhA) is the national professional organization for pharmacists in [Canada](#).^[5] Specific requirements for practice vary across provinces, but generally include:

- a Bachelor's of Science in Pharmacy from a recognized university
- successful completion of a national board examination through the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada
- practical experience through an apprenticeship/internship program.

The vast majority (80%) of Canada's licensed pharmacists work in community pharmacies, another 15 percent in hospital or institutional pharmacies. Some pharmacists work in situations that may not legally require licensed pharmacists, such as associations, pharmaceutical companies, and consulting firms.

Salary

On average, Pharmacist can earn about \$94,520 per year.

Required Training and Education to Become a Pharmacist

The UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences is the only faculty of pharmacy in British Columbia. In this program, students learn how to help patients use medications and medical devices; provide drug information to patients and other health professionals; and much more. The curriculum incorporates problem-based learning, and many courses emphasize small group work, group projects, presentations, workshops and the use of web technology. The curriculum also includes experiential learning, in the form of clerkships completed at community and hospital sites.

Graduates of the program can apply for licensure as a pharmacist in any province in Canada, and may continue their education by applying for graduate programs.

For admission requirements and intake dates go to <http://www.pharmacy.ubc.ca/programs/degree-programs/BscP/faq>

Career Advancement/Prospects

The demand for pharmaceutical services is rising in response to the increasing proportion of the population who are over the age of 65.

In particular, Canada's aging population has resulted in a quickly increasing number of prescriptions being filled by pharmacists over the last 10 years.

The largest increase in pharmacy activity has taken place in community pharmacies that are located in food and general merchandise stores. Many jobs will continue to be created in retail pharmacies because more supermarkets and general merchandisers will open pharmacies in their stores.

The aging population is putting increased pressure on the need for more hospital pharmacies. According to the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists, an increasing number of hospitals, especially in small centres, have reported long-term vacancies for pharmacists. Many pharmacists are leaving hospitals to work in community pharmacies. One reason for this may be because hospital pharmacists generally make less money than community pharmacists, even though they work under more stressful conditions. Temporary openings that result from maternity leaves are also difficult to fill.

Industry sources report a current shortage of pharmacists in BC. In particular, rural communities are especially short of both community and hospital pharmacists. As a result, demand for pharmacists in these smaller communities is high.

Graduates of clinical and non-clinical hospital pharmacy programs, and pharmacists with previous experience working in hospitals, are also in demand in the province. Those with doctorate of pharmacy degrees are especially in high demand in hospitals.

Resources

Educational Programs

Dalhousie University
www.pharmacy.dal.ca

Memorial University of Newfoundland
www.mun.ca/pharmacy

Université de Montréal
www.pharm.umontreal.ca

Université Laval
www.pha.ulaval.ca

University of Alberta
www.pharmacy.ualberta.ca

University of British Columbia
www.pharmacy.ubc.ca

University of Manitoba
www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/pharmacy/index.html

University of Saskatchewan
College of Pharmacy and Nutrition
URL: www.usask.ca/pharmacy-nutrition

University of Toronto
www.utoronto.ca/pharmacy

University of Waterloo
www.pharmacy.uwaterloo.ca

Provincial Regulatory Authorities

Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP)

www.pharmacists.ab.ca

College of Pharmacists of British Columbia (CPBC)
www.bcpharmacists.org

Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association (MPHA)
www.mpha.ca

New Brunswick Pharmaceutical Society
www.nbpharmacists.ca Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board

www.nlph.ca

College of Pharmacists of British Columbia
<http://www.bcpharmacists.org/>

National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Associations
<http://www.napra.org/>

Northwest Territories Regulatory Authority
www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca

Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
www.nspharmacists.ca

Ontario College of Pharmacists
www.ocpinfo.com

Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec
www.opq.org

Prince Edward Island Pharmacy Board
E-mail: peipharm@pei.aibn.com Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists
www.saskpharm.ca Yukon Regulatory Authority
consumer@gov.yk.ca

Financial assistance and bursaries

For information about Canada student loans and grants, please visit:
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/learning/canada_student_loan/index.shtml

Associations

Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA)
www.rxa.ca

Association des pharmaciens des établissements de santé du Québec (APES)
www.apesquebec.org

Association québécoise des pharmaciens propriétaires (AQPP)
www.aqpp.qc.ca

British Columbia Pharmacy Association (BCPhA)
www.bcpharmacy.ca

Manitoba Society of Pharmacists (MSP)
www.msp.mb.ca

British Columbia Pharmacy Association
<http://www.bcpharmacy.ca/>

Canadian Pharmacists Association
<http://www.pharmacists.ca/index.cfm>

Canadian Society for Pharmaceutical Sciences
<http://www.cspscanada.org/>

Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists
<http://www.cshp.ca/>

Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists, British Columbia Branch
<http://www.cshp-bc.com/>