KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AS A PATIENT IN THE AGE OF E-PRESCRIBING!



Doctors more and more issue prescriptions by computer. An electronic system allows physicians to send prescriptions over a computer network straight to a pharmacy without the patient ever receiving or having to take a written prescription slip to have the prescription filled. This is called “e-prescribing”.

1. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE YOUR MEDICINE “E-PRESCRIBED”.

If it is convenient for you to have your medicine “e-prescribed”, you have the right to ask for it and, in many doctors’ offices across the United States of America, it’s the default option.

2. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PICK YOUR PREFERRED PHARMACY TO WHICH YOUR “E-PRESCRIPTION” IS SENT.

But if you have your medicine “e-prescribed”, you have the right to pick the pharmacy to which your doctor’s office will send the prescription to be filled. In fact, it’s a violation of your rights for the doctor’s office to override your preference in dispensing pharmacies. That’s called “steering” and it’s against the law.
Note, though, that in some states the e-prescribing system may connect state doctors mainly or only with that state's pharmacies. e.g., New York

3. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE THE DOCTOR GIVE YOU A TRADITIONAL WRITTEN PRESCRIPTION.

You also have the right to ask your doctor to issue a traditional written prescription to you. You may want this, for example, so that you can shop the prescription around at more than one pharmacy until you find the best deal for you, whether based on price or other terms of service.

You may also want a traditional written prescription in case you plan to travel, and you want to have the prescription with you in case you need to have it filled while you’re away from home.

4. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO GET YOUR PRESCRIPTION FILLED OUT OF STATE.

Even though your doctor’s office is in your home state, you have the right to have your prescription filled out-of-state, if you wish. To help you exercise that right, the e-prescribing laws protect your right to have your prescription sent by fax to the pharmacy or dispenser of your choice, even if it’s not in your home state. To accommodate your right to make that choice, the law tells the doctor simply that the prescription form that is faxed has to have the same information as is found on a regular prescription form and it needs to be signed by the prescribing doctor, just like a prescription jotted down on the doctor’s prescription pad.

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CONTACT US

CANARX Planholder / Admin
Phone: 1-888-739-2718
Fax: 1-866-715-6337

CANARX Member
Phone: 1-866-893-6337
Fax: 1-866-715-6337