

Pharmacists dispense drugs prescribed by physicians and other health practitioners and provide information to patients about medications and their use. They advise physicians and other health practitioners on the selection, dosages, interactions, and side effects of medications. Pharmacists must understand the use; clinical effects; and composition of drugs, including their chemical, biological, and physical properties. Compounding—the actual mixing of ingredients to form powders, tablets, capsules, ointments, and solutions—is only a small part of a pharmacist's practice, because most medicines are produced by pharmaceutical companies in a standard dosage and drug delivery form.

Pharmacists in **community** or **retail pharmacies** counsel patients and answer questions about prescription drugs, such as those about possible adverse reactions or interactions. They provide information about over-the-counter drugs and make recommendations after asking a series of health questions, such as whether the customer is taking any other medications. They also give advice about durable medical equipment and home healthcare supplies. Pharmacists in **hospitals** and **clinics** dispense medications and advise the medical staff on the selection and effects of drugs. They may make sterile solutions and buy medical supplies. They also assess, plan, and monitor drug programs or regimens, and counsel patients on the use of drugs.

Pharmacy Technicians and Assistants help licensed pharmacists provide medication and other health care products to patients. Pharmacy technicians usually perform more complex tasks than assistants do, although in some States their duties and job titles overlap. Pharmacy assistants usually have fewer, less complex responsibilities than technicians. Assistants are often clerks or cashiers who primarily answer telephones, handle money, stock shelves, and perform other clerical duties.

Salary Information:

- Pharmacist, Doctoral Degree
\$104,260 Median Salary (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008)
- ***Pharmacists for the Rochester, New York area:***
\$111,000 Median Salary (Career One Stop, 2008)
[*Salary varies based on education/advanced degree, work-experience & setting/location]

Transfer Information:

- Pharmacy programs grant the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), which requires at least 6 years of postsecondary study and the passing of the licensure examination of a State board of pharmacy.

Additional Information:

- American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy: www.aacp.org
- National Association of Boards of Pharmacy: www.nabp.net

