

# STANDING ORDER FOR MEDICATION REFILLS

## Overview

This standing order allows nurses (LPNs and RNs) to fulfill routine requests for refills and physician orders without having to wait for a physician's approval. This allows the clinic to address patients' needs quickly but still ensure that patients are up-to-date on their recommended care and monitoring.

## General expectations

- Before completing any standing order for refill requests, review the last clinic note for the patient to ensure that he or she is not overdue for follow-up. If a patient is overdue, schedule an appointment in the next 30 days in addition to providing the refill.
- Refill only the medications listed below. If you are unfamiliar with a medication, consult the primary care physician (PCP). Do not refill any medication not listed on this protocol.
- Refills only apply to medications that our office has previously prescribed.
- *No controlled substance prescriptions may be sent by LPNs or RNs.*

## General prescriptions

If a prescription was written within the last two weeks but there was an error with the pharmacy receiving the prescription, nurses may resend the prescription.

## Diabetic supplies

It is OK to refill all supplies, including syringes, needles, lancets, and glucometers, as long as the patient has been seen in the office within the prior year. It is OK to change the brand of supplies if required by insurance. Keep the testing frequency indicated for the previous supplies. Refill supplies for only up to one year following the patient's last office visit.

## Thyroid medications

(levothyroxine and armour thyroid)

Ensure that the patient has had both a thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) test and an office visit within the previous 12 months.

- If the TSH was normal (0.45-4.5) and the patient was seen in the previous 12 months, then refill the medication up until the patient is due for the next annual visit.

- If the TSH was abnormal (lower than 0.45 or higher than 4.5), then send the request to the PCP.

If the patient was not seen within the previous 12 months:

- Schedule an appointment within 30 days.
- Notify the PCP that labs will be needed at the next visit.
- Send a 30-day refill with NO additional refills only after scheduling the appointment.

## Cholesterol medications

(atorvastatin, pravastatin, or other statins)

Ensure that the patient has had an office visit within the previous 12 months.

- If the patient has had an appointment, then refill until the patient's next annual visit.
- If the patient has not had an appointment in the previous 12 months, then schedule an appointment within 30 days. Send a 30-day refill with NO additional refills only after scheduling the appointment.

## Oral contraceptives

(progestins: drospirenone, levonorgestrel, norethindrone acetate, desogestrel, ethynodiol diacetate, norgestimate, cyproterone, and dienogest; and estrogens: ethinyl estradiol, estradiol valerate, and mestranol)

Ensure that the patient has had an office visit within the previous 12 months.

- If the patient has had an appointment within 12 months AND has not missed more than one dose, then refill until the patient's next annual visit. If the patient has missed one dose, advise the patient to take two pills today and then one pill daily. If the patient has missed two or more doses, notify the PCP, who will determine whether to refill the medication.
- If it has been more than 12 months since the last visit AND the patient has not missed more than one dose, then schedule an appointment within 30 days. Send a 30-day refill with NO additional refills only after scheduling the appointment.

*Note: State laws vary on which health care professionals are allowed to prescribe various types of medication. Always check your state's restrictions before implementing a standing order for medication refills.*



**FPM Toolbox** To find more practice resources, visit <https://www.aafp.org/fpm/toolbox>.

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