

A Report from the Pharmacist, Amy O'Neill
Penwood Clinic, Kingston, Jamaica
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This is an outline of what may be beneficial to any pharmacist who would serve at Penwood Clinic for Mission Jamaica. Of course, this is based on experiences from the week of Feb. 21-28, 2004. There are going to be different patients and situations for everyone.

- A. Inventory: These are items I would recommend having at the clinic. (An asterisk* indicates that a large quantity would be beneficial.)
1. OTC drugs/products
 - a. Multivitamins***: Adult, Children's, and Infants
 - b. Acetaminophen**: Adult, Children's, and Infants
 - c. Acne cream
 - d. Ibuprofen**: Adult & Children's
 - e. Anti-fungal cream*** (clotrimazole, miconazole, tolnaftate, etc.)
 - f. Vaginal yeast infection treatment packs**(Monistat-7, etc.)
 - g. Cough/Cold remedies***: Adult & Children's (We dispensed about 150 orders for liquid cough/cold medication in 3 days.)
 - h. Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) tablets
 - i. Nasal saline drops (for infants with congestion)
 - j. Aspirin 325mg and 81mg
 - k. Antibiotic cream/ointment (Neosporin)
 - l. Pain relief cream (Theragesic, Bengay, etc.)
 - m. Hydrocortisone 1% cream*
 - n. Antihistamine tablets (Benadryl, Clarinex, Chlorpheniramine)
 - o. Diphenhydramine cream or gel
 - p. GI relief products (Tums, Mylanta, Gas-X, Pepcid-AC)
 - q. Imodium (Loperamide) tablets
 - r. Iron supplements
 - s. Condoms***
 2. Prescription drugs
 - a. Acyclovir tablets
 - b. Albuterol inhalers*
 - c. Amoxicillin* capsules and suspension
 - d. Atenolol 50mg tablets
 - e. Augmentin tablets and suspension
 - f. Bactrim/Septa DS tablets
 - g. Bactroban cream
 - h. Birth control pills or patches*
 - i. Cefzil tablets and suspension
 - j. Cipro 500mg tablets**
 - k. Diflucan 150mg tablets**
 - l. Flagyl (metronidazole) 250mg tablets**
 - m. Glyburide or glipizide

- n. Griseofulvin 125mg, 250mg, and 500mg tablets***
- o. Hydrochlorothiazide 25mg tablets*
- p. Keflex 500mg capsules
- q. Metformin 500mg tablets*
- r. Naproxen 500mg tablets
- s. Nexium, Aciphex, Protonix, Prilosec, Prevacid* (any of these)
- t. Ophthalmic antibiotic solution
- u. Otic antibiotic suspension
- v. Penicillin VK 500mg tablets
- w. Prenatal vitamins*
- x. Triamcinolone 0.1% cream*
- y. Vermox 100mg tablets**
- z. Vioxx 25mg capsules
- aa. Zithromax 250mg tablets** and suspension

3. Supplies

- a. Vials with caps (sandwich bags with zip lock will work too)
- b. Amber bottles for liquids
- c. Counting tray and spatula
- d. Pill splitter and/or knife
- e. Labels
- f. Pens
- g. Oral syringes (Make sure you have enough for antibiotics, cough/cold liquids, and liquid Tylenol/Advil. I brought #100 and it was not enough.)
- h. Plastic graduated cylinder, 120ml (for reconstituting powdered antibiotics)
- i. Distilled water
- j. Note pads or paper tablets
- k. Paper towels
- l. Hand sanitizer/antibacterial soap

B. Preparation

1. Pre-packing medications

- a. If you acquire bulk-sized products (Tylenol, Multivitamins, etc.), it would have been nice to have pre-packed and labeled bottles of #100 for Advil or Tylenol, or #30 for multivitamins.
- b. Small bottles of cough/cold liquid would be easier to dispense than large bottles that you might have to divide up.
- c. Some prescriptions may be pre-packed depending on the physicians. For instance, griseofulvin 125mg BID for 6 weeks (tinea capitis), was used quite often, as well as Vermox 100mg BID for 3 days (roundworms). Also Cipro 500mg #1, Flagyl 2gm, and Zithromax 1gm, take all at once, for vaginitis was common.

2. Researching dosing guidelines

- a. Knowing the dosing guidelines for the OTC cough/cold combinations you have is a must. It is best to be able to go by

age or weight, as many Moms do not know their children's weight.

- b. Be prepared to give dosing advice for the prescription products as well. They do have some drug guidebooks, but it is nice to have an information source you are comfortable using.

3. Setting up

- a. I put all the drugs on the shelves in alphabetical order, Rx and OTC in different areas. This also familiarized me with what drugs I had to choose from (to suggest to the team).
- b. Clean your work area as well as possible.
- c. Set up your supplies so that they are handy
- d. Bring water and maybe a snack for yourself.
- e. Hand sanitizer was nice to have, as well as paper towels.

C. Filling orders

1. Maintaining order

- a. The patients are eager to get their medicine and be on their way, as they have been at the clinic a long time and the pharmacy is their last stop. Be patient with their restless (and sometimes pushy) behavior.
- b. Prioritize the patients who have drug orders from the physicians. They have been at the clinic the longest usually.
- c. Take care of the OTC drug requests (patients who come in to see the pharmacist, but do not want to wait for a physician,) as well as you can, but be careful not to run out of drugs that may be necessary for the patients who are waiting to see the physician. This happened with the antifungal creams and vitamins.
- d. It is best to have a guard at the front gate as well as at the door of the clinic. People off the street can easily barrage the pharmacist when they hear there is free ibuprofen and vitamins to be had.

2. Labeling

- a. I hand-wrote the patient's name, the drug name and strength, the quantity, the directions, and the date on a label, then labeled the bottle or bag.
- b. Make sure the directions are clearly written. I found that although I counseled each patient on how to take a medication, they were either not listening or the noise in the clinic was such that they did not hear the directions.

3. Reconstituting

- a. First ask the patient if they have a refrigerator before mixing an antibiotic that needs refrigeration.
- b. Show the parent the oral syringe and how to measure their child's dose.

4. Counseling

- a. Clearly communicating the medication directions is vital to the pharmacist's job. Many of the patients I saw were unfamiliar

with concepts like “every 4-6 hours as needed”. “Four times a day” was a more common phrase.

- b. Make sure the patient knows what the medication is supposed to do. Many mothers were wary of the griseofulvin tablets their children were prescribed. They didn’t believe that a tablet would cure their child’s ringworm better than a cream.
- c. The women who received vaginal yeast infection treatments and vaginitis medication were counseled on how to prevent re-infection. This is an area where you can’t be too shy.

D. The team

1. Get to know the physicians and dentist who you will be working with. Inform them of the medication you have on stock and set up a system to fill drug orders efficiently and effectively.
2. Work with the nurses. Quite often the nurse would be the go-between with you and the physician. Sometimes they would see patients and treat them with OTC drug orders. Help them all you can.
3. When you get a chance, get out of the “pharmacy” and help in other areas or just take a look around, and talk with the patients who are waiting. Sometimes the pharmacist can help by making suggestions or by doing little favors for the rest of the team. Make sure the team is healthy, and offer ibuprofen, acetaminophen, Imodium, or cough/cold remedies to those who could use them.
4. Talk with Daphne, the nurse who runs the clinic. She is a huge source of information. When we ran out of antifungal cream, I found out about a local plant that has antifungal properties. (It is called the King of the Forest plant, and when you rub the juice out of the leaves, apply it twice a day for a week or two, and it can cure athlete’s foot or tinea corporis.)
5. Call Owen Steele, a local pharmacist who helps run the clinic, if you need to. If you run out of a particular product, he may be able to sell some to you from his pharmacy. Confer with the physicians first, and then check if you have the resources to buy more products. Daphne has his phone number.

E. Have fun

1. Make friends with the medical team. Humor eases a lot of tension, and expect to cry sometimes. Having a shoulder to cry on is a great help.
2. Make friends with the patients. The Jamaican people are wonderful. If you take time to talk to them, they can really add to your day. (I got to hold the most precious babies because I took the time to talk to their mothers.)
3. Expect problems. Pharmacists are perfectionists usually. Knowing that you won’t be able to help everyone and that problems will pop up will allow you to cope a little better when this happens. Be creative. Inventive solutions usually can be found.
4. Bring your camera. You can get pictures of your daily work, but also find photo opportunities of the rest of the team by keeping your eyes open.