

Anticipate That RFID Will Become More Common

We're getting questions about **using radio-frequency identification (RFID) for meds.**

It's encouraged due to benefits, such as increased accuracy and efficiency...compared to more labor-intensive, manual processes.

Think of RFID as similar to barcode labels and scanners.

A big difference is RFID tags can be read without direct line of sight...since info is transmitted through radio waves.

Plus multiple RFID tags can be read at one time...as opposed to needing to scan multiple barcodes individually.

That's why RFID is useful for checking expired, recalled, or used meds. For example, it can tell you which meds need to be replaced in code trays...and possibly locations of trays that need to be restocked.

And you may have already seen RFID used for consignment meds in your pharmacy. Consigners have used RFID for years...to remotely monitor expiration dates and stock levels of these costly meds.

Don't be surprised if RFID is used along with barcodes.

For instance, you may need to scan med barcodes to generate RFID tags to attach to packaging when they're received...if your pharmacy doesn't get pre-tagged meds.

Anticipate that RFID will become more common...such as in specific areas (peri-op, etc) or for more of your med inventory.

Provide feedback to ensure successful implementation.

Think about practical aspects, such as tag size and how they adhere to med packaging...and broader issues, such as workflow and ensuring your team receives thorough training.

Also help examine workload. RFID will save time in some areas...but there will be new tasks required for RFID.

Avoid common pitfalls with RFID...it's NOT foolproof.

For instance, if you add RFID tags to meds, ensure they're double-checked according to pharmacy policies...to prevent errors.

Putting a med's RFID tag on a different med could cause problems...such as dispensing or administering the wrong med.

And be aware of steps to address issues. For example, there may be interference between tags and readers...and you'll need to know how and when to contact customer support.

Get our resource, *Optimizing Pharmacy Workflow*, for a broad overview of strategies to ensure efficiency.

Key References:

-<https://www.ashpfoundation.org/grants-and-awards/research-grants/rfid> (3-2-23)

-Am J Health Syst Pharm. 2022 Dec 8. doi: 10.1093/ajhp/zxac367

-Am J Health Syst Pharm. 2018 Mar 1;75(5):304-308

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