



Explanation of Compounding Pharmacy and What to Look For in a Compounding Pharmacy

Why Use Drug Compounding?

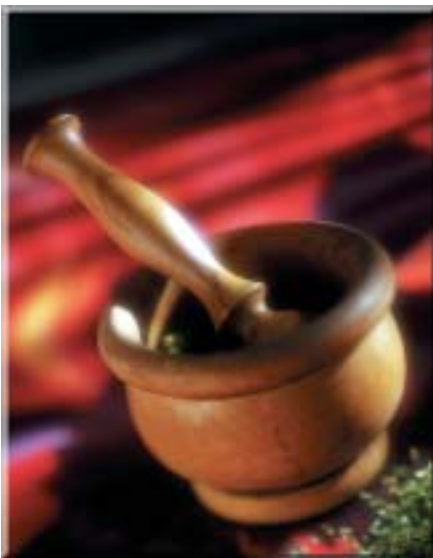
Pharmaceutical compounding can enhance any physician's practice. You can improve upon patient compliance and outcome by taking the time to understand your patient's needs, and combining your skills with those of our compounding pharmacists to develop products for the specific needs of your patients.

Each patient is an individual so why should one drug fit all. Each individual's reaction to a particular medicinal substance (natural or synthetic) is different. Difficult-to-predict factors include fast-versus-slow metabolism, bioavailability, side effects, and cellular transport. This biochemical individuality can pose difficult barriers to appropriate prescribing. Compounding allows you to respond to each person's uniqueness in an individualized way.

No longer are you limited to "standard" medicine. Your choices now include new routes of administration, dosage strengths, pharmaceutical combinations and the ability to develop new, potentially helpful compounds. Medicine can be as large as your imagination will allow.

Familiar medications may be used in novel combinations and administration routes. Natural medications may be combined with commercial pharmaceuticals. With your imagination and our consulting pharmacists' expertise, we can prepare a broad range of drugs for office dispensing or patient prescription.

During the patient counseling session, our pharmacists will emphasize that you have prescribed a custom compounded medication to treat their unique medical requirements. This can be a powerful message to the patient; the physician and pharmacist view this person as an individual with individual medication requirements. As patient response rates increase, so will their sense of well-being. Satisfied patients always seem to find a way to "spread the word" of your ability to listen and help.



What to Look for in a Compounding Pharmacy

Pharmaceutical compounding requires a higher level of dedication to pharmacy than just mixing and requires that all pharmacists be specially trained and knowledgeable about the strengths and challenges of compounding.

A compounding pharmacy should be able to provide you with a reservoir of compounded prescription monographs to help you understand the great range of drugs and administration routes available.

A good compounding pharmacy should be able to help you write a special compounding prescription. Like patients, no two pharmaceuticals will behave the same.

The ability of a pharmacist to formulate a new compound increases with time and experience. Highly qualified compounding pharmacists can usually discuss the potential formula with you immediately. *This does not mean they will have an instant answer, but that he or she should, at least, be able to review the possible dosage forms applicable to the specific compound.* The ability to create a new formula is truly a large part of the art of compounding. Look for a compounding pharmacist who has been certified in compounding by, The National Association of Compounding Pharmacists, especially if sterile products are involved.

For the pharmacist to have the appropriate knowledge and experience is only part of the requirements you should seek of a compounding pharmacy. A compounding pharmacy must be comprised of pharmacists, pharmacist technicians, and supporting staff that makes more than a commitment to quality, they must live it each moment they are in the pharmacy. Steps should be taken by the pharmacy to review even the smallest mistake. Always ask for proof of a pharmacy's commitment to quality. If a pharmacy cannot provide hard copy proof in specific terms, stay away.

Consider also the equipment the pharmacists will use in compounding. Proper equipment with regular

equipment calibration and maintenance is a must. Minimum quality standards require written records of calibration and maintenance routines. Ask for them. A compounding pharmacist, like a surgeon, is only as good as his tools allow him to be.

The compounding facility must make sense for the pharmaceuticals produced. If a pharmacy makes sterile products and follows the standards set forth in the United States Pharmacopoeia, it must have gowning anterooms and class 100 clean rooms of adequate size. If you intend to have sterile products compounded, ask for a floor plan that will show this.

Pharmacists will counsel patients about the medications they intend to use. Ideally, the pharmacist counsels your patients on a one-on-one basis. This way, the patient gets the instructions directly from the pharmacist who is responsible for compounding your prescription. Proper counseling will enhance patient compliance and patient outcome. Ask how they will achieve this.

Integrating compounded medicines into one's practice is simple. It requires no special equipment or financial investment on behalf of the doctor. It will take a minimal amount of your time to develop a relationship with a compounding pharmacist and to gain the necessary knowledge to write a compounded prescription. The investment of time will yield far greater dividends than you may expect.

