

Letter to Editor

## FROM DOCTOR HANDWRITING TO YOUR HANDS: UNDERSTANDING PRESCRIPTION



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### 1. Introduction

For many people in India, a doctor's prescription looks like a puzzle written in mysterious handwriting. Between abbreviations, brand names, and unusual symbols, it can be confusing to know exactly what medicine to take and how to take it. Unfortunately, this confusion can lead to serious mistakes in medication use.

As a Doctor of Pharmacy, I believe that every patient has the right to understand their prescription. In this guide, we will break down the parts of a prescription and explain them in clear, simple terms — so that you can take your medicines safely and confidently.

### 2. Why Understanding Your Prescription Matters

Misunderstanding your prescription can have serious consequences, including: Taking the wrong dose – which can cause under-treatment or harmful side effects. Using the wrong medicine – due to similar brand names or unclear handwriting. Missing doses – which can reduce the medicine's effectiveness.

Knowing how to read your prescription ensures that you follow your doctor's instructions correctly, avoid errors, and get the full benefit of your treatment.

### 3. The Main Parts of a Prescription

1. Patient Information – Includes your name, age, and sometimes your weight.
2. Date – Shows when the prescription was written.
3. The "Rx" Symbol – A Latin abbreviation meaning "Take."
4. Medicine Details – Name, strength, and form (tablet, syrup, etc.).
5. Directions for Use – Abbreviations like OD (once a day), BD (twice a day), TDS (three times a day).
6. Duration of Treatment – Number of days/weeks to take the medicine.
7. Special Instructions – e.g., with food, before meals, avoid alcohol.
8. Doctor's Details – Name, signature, registration number.

### 4. Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Misreading "OD" as "BD" and doubling your dose.
- Not checking if the medicine from the pharmacy matches the prescription.
- Taking leftover medicines from a previous illness without checking with a doctor.

## 5. Safety Tips for Patients

- Always read your prescription before leaving the clinic.
- Ask your doctor to write the generic name clearly.
- If you cannot read the handwriting, confirm with your pharmacist.
- Keep all prescriptions safe — they are your medical record.
- Never share your prescribed medicine with someone else.

## 6. Conclusion

Your prescription is more than just a slip of paper — it is a personalised treatment plan for your health.

Understanding it empowers you to take your medicines correctly, prevent mistakes, and achieve better results from your treatment. The next time you receive a prescription in India, take a minute to read it carefully. And remember, if something is unclear, your pharmacist or doctor is there to help.

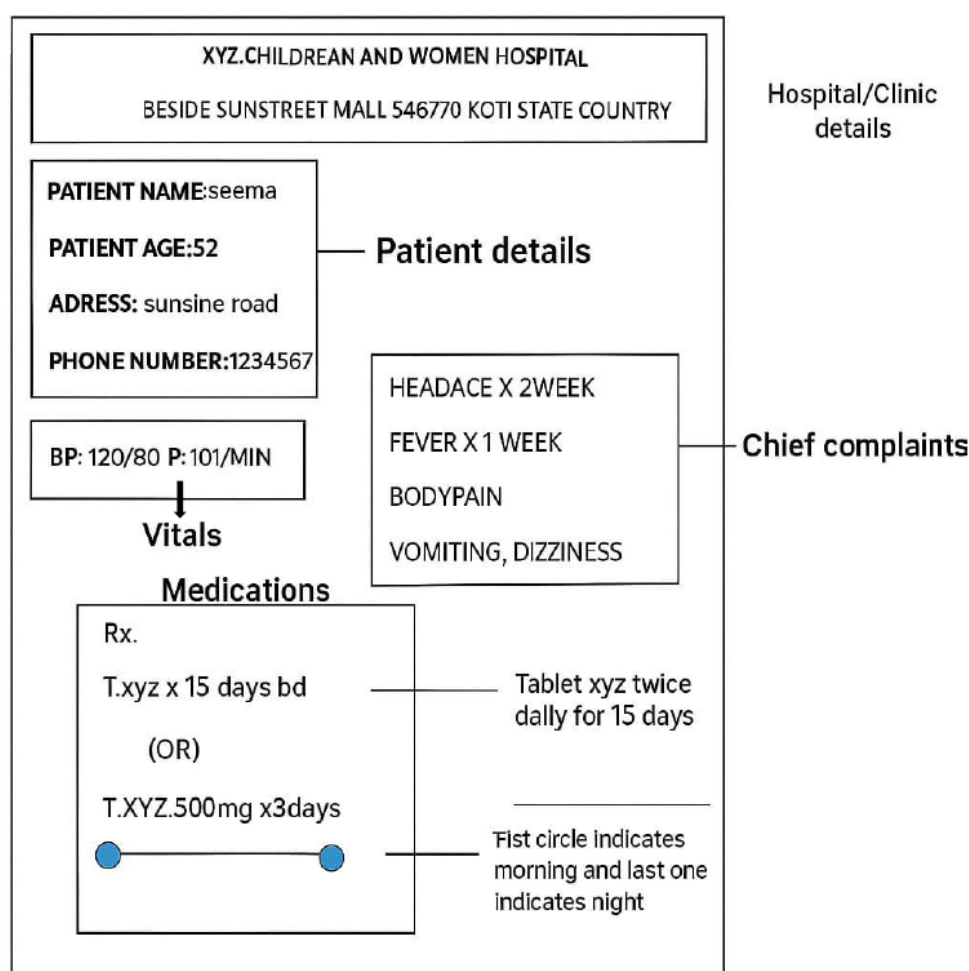


Diagram to Understand Important Part of Prescription:c

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