

Get DRUG SMART

*Things to consider in physician interactions
with pharmaceutical companies:*

- D**inners and other gifts have been shown to create relationships and affect clinical judgment in the prescribing of drugs.
- R**esearch is key to treatments for patients—use objective data (for example, from PIER[®], the Cochrane Review[®], The Medical Letter[®], UpToDate[®], PubMed[®], and journals) prior to prescribing.
- U**nderstand costs to patients and to society; not all treatments are worthwhile or necessary.
- G**ifts: The acceptance by a physician of individual gifts, hospitality, trips, and subsidies of all types that might diminish or appear to others to diminish the objectivity of their professional judgment is strongly discouraged. Evaluate any potential for influence on clinical judgment.
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- S**elect information can be presented by drug representatives as an effective marketing tool; raw data and head-to-head comparisons are infrequently volunteered or available. Critically evaluate information from all sources.
- M**onetary rewards (beyond reasonable compensation for time and expenses) should be declined for participating in trials or recruiting patients/subjects.
- A**lternatives such as generic drugs, other classes of drugs, and competing products should always be considered.
- R**estrict interaction with industry representatives to educational contacts and maintain boundaries.
- T**alk to peers and colleagues about potential bias in drug information and conflicts of interest.

Physicians and the pharmaceutical industry have shared interests in advancing medical knowledge and quality health care. Industry makes many positive contributions to those ends. But the primary responsibility of the physician is to promote the best interests of the patient. Interactions between physicians and industry must maximize the good of the patient.

References

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