

A Pharmacist's Perspective on Drug Information Software for PDA

Many clinicians have discovered that Palm or pocket PC PDA's are a valuable, portable and updateable reference tool. Palm-based drug information programs are useful for checking drug dosage, effects, interactions, pregnancy/lactation information, disease management and herb/natural product information. This chart is a comparison of two popular information programs available for Palm and Pocket PC: Lexi-Drugs and Epocrates.

Reference	Lexi – Drugs (www.lexi.com)	Epocrates Rx (www2.epocrates.com)
Available Programs and Memory Requirements	<p>PLATINUM: Core drug information program - 7000 US and Canadian Drug Names (up to 5.8 MB)</p> <p>CLINICAL SUITE Includes platinum + Griffith's 5 minute medical consult + Lexi-Interact (drug interaction program) + Diagnostic Medicine (+ medical calculator called (11 MB)</p> <p>LEXI-COMPLETE (15 interactive medical handbooks): Platinum + Pediatrics + Griffith's 5 minute medical consult + Natural Products Database + Poison/Toxicology, Infectious Disease, Diagnostic Med, Lexi Interact, Drugs in Dentistry and Nursing, Med Abbreviations, Nuclear/Biological/Chemical Agent Exposure, Pharmacogenomics, Patient Leaflet's, Stedman's Medical Dictionary (up to 40 MB)</p> <p>Available on both Palm and Pocket PC</p>	<p>Epocrates Rx 6.51: 3000 drugs – very basic information, cholesterol calculator, drug interactions, docalert messages (3 MB)</p> <p>Epocrates Rx Pro 6.51: contains Epocrates 6.51 (drug interactions, medmath, cholesterol, docalert) + 400 natural products, 50 clinical tables, ID guide (3 MB)</p> <p>Epocrates Suite: Epocrates Rx PRO + Epocrates Dx (by Griffith's –see left) + epocrates lab + epocrates med tools (6.8 MB)</p>
Advantages	<p>Detailed large database (including off label uses) but "jump" tabs make it quick to find info</p> <p>Updates can be downloaded as autoupdates via the lexi connect feature every few days</p> <p>Link to special alerts from the main menu</p> <p>Lexi-Comp's medical calculator now included free of charge with any software subscription</p> <p>20 use demo version available</p> <p>Cost savings if you buy a 2 year or 3 year subscription</p> <p>Software compatible with expansion cards</p> <p>Notes feature – allows you to write notes</p> <p>CMA gives a free online option to lexi platinum</p>	<p>DOC alerts</p> <p>Basic program (6.51) is free and includes basic drug interaction, docalert and medmath information BUT lacks information on Canadian drugs, kinetics, pharmacology, off label use and monitoring</p> <p>Program is simple to navigate – general listing as well as a grouping by drug class</p> <p>Rx Pro has an alternative medicine reference, infectious disease guide, and clinical tables</p> <p>Cost savings if you buy a 2 year subscription</p> <p>Notes feature – allows you to write notes</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Very detailed; sometimes hard on the eyes (use "jump" feature to get around this)</p> <p>Not ideal for students – no explanations of the basics</p> <p>No herbal/alternative products listed in the basic drug programs (only in LEXI-COMPLETE)</p> <p>Size</p>	<p>The free version lacks Canadian trade names/information</p> <p>Information on mechanism of action and pharmacokinetics is very limited</p> <p>Spy ware: at every Hot sync, the epocrates auto update returns to the publisher a list of drugs that have been looked up and stores demographic information about users</p> <p>Some advertising</p> <p>Epocrates software is NOT compatible with expansion cards</p>
Cost	<p>PLATINUM - \$75 US/year</p> <p>CLINICAL SUITE - \$175 US/year</p> <p>COMPLETE - \$225 US/year</p>	<p>Rx 6.51 – free</p> <p>Rx Pro 6.51 - \$60 US/year</p> <p>Suite - \$140 US/year</p>

Sheli's Pick: Lexi - Drugs, because:

Most thorough and up to date stand-alone drug information resource available!! - current and frequently updated – you don't need any other drug reference on your palm!

Useful link to Special Alerts from the main menu.

Very attractive for those who need a reference for daily clinical use

Pharmacokinetics/mechanism of action sections are strong where others are lacking

Provides updates without sending personal data to the publisher

Packages may take more memory than other programs so memory cards may be needed on smaller units (ie 8 mb)

Available for both palm and pocket PC

Has been validated in several peer-reviewed journals as "best performer" when features such as scope, completeness and ease of use have been taken into consideration

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