

Fass – focus on patient safety

More and more information is available via digital channels, especially on health and medical care, and today many websites and databases are health-related. The Internet has become a natural source for providing information, which is often free and available to everyone. The same applies to information about medications. But since anyone can provide online information about health, the quality of the information may vary significantly.

LIF (*Läkemedelsindustriföreningen*), which represents the research-based pharmaceutical industry in Sweden, has developed Fass in close cooperation with its member companies and assumes responsibility for providing to everyone extensive, quality assured and up-to-date information about medicines that are available in Sweden. Through accuracy and transparency, Fass can simplify the exchange of knowledge between patient and doctor. Patients can easily learn about different pharmaceuticals and prepare for their visit to the doctor, while doctors and healthcare personnel can ensure that they have the latest information, resulting in greater patient safety. Fass can then help to raise the quality of treatment, improve medicines management and reduce healthcare costs.

But patient safety also requires regular updates of the source, which occurs at Fass.se. For example, there are updates on how medicines should be used, what dosages are appropriate, what side effects have been identified and the cases in which a particular medicine should not be taken. For the sake of patient safety, it is clearly preferable for health professionals to research information on pharmaceuticals at Fass.se, rather than in the hard copy Fass. Thanks to continual updates and improvements, Fass.se is held in high regard as the source of knowledge about medications.



Fass.se contains everything from package leaflets, SPCs and tablet identification references to medical texts, online courses and instructional videos. And everything in between. Through its breadth and depth, Fass.se is the source of knowledge about medications.



By using the online resource at Fass.se instead of the printed book, you can contribute to enhanced patient safety while safeguarding the environment.



Fass – the source for knowledge about medications

Fass – a long story

In 1966 the first compilation of drug information called *Farmaceutiska Specialiteter i Sverige* (Pharmaceutical Specialities in Sweden), abbreviated Fass, was published by the pharmaceutical industry. In the vernacular, it quickly became known as the pharmaceutical Bible. Seven years later, Fass for veterinary medicine came along and in 1983 the first Patient Fass, geared to the general public, was published.

New technological solutions paved the way for new opportunities. A modern database was developed that laid the foundation for the Fass website, prescriber support systems and several other important information channels providing access to updated information about medicines from the pharmaceutical industry. In 2001 Fass.se was launched, making Sweden the first country in Europe where all residents had free access to online information on approved medications. This Swedish initiative was no coincidence, given our long tradition of openness and transparency. Swedes are also among the most internet-savvy people in Europe, with a user rate of 89 percent of the population.

As technological developments continue, it has become important for the pharmaceutical industry to modernise Fass.se to meet external needs and requirements. The technical platform was replaced and in 2013 the new Fass.se was launched, with the same content as before but with improved user-friendliness and accessibility. Users can now easily and quickly find what they are looking for, regardless of whether they are using a computer, tablet or mobile phone. At the same time the modern platform set the stage for new services such as pharmacies' inventory status, to continue to meet the future demands and requirements of visitors and the outside world.

The logo, inspired by a medicine vessel from the 1500s, symbolises the role that Fass plays in the community. The vessel is more than just a container for medicine; it should also be viewed as the source of knowledge.

FASS 

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Fass – so much more than meets the eye

To meet the needs of the public for quality-assured and up-to-date information about medicines, it must be available through different channels and derived from a variety of sources. Therefore various features have been developed, either by individual participants or through partnerships, in an effort to harness the broad base of expertise that has long been accumulated in Sweden.

About 200 pharmaceutical companies contribute content to the Fass database with important daily updates to information about medicines. The information in the database is structured as Extensible Markup Language (XML) to allow easy exchange with other information systems. The database contains more than 10,000 documents, such as Fass texts, SPCs and package leaflets. The information in the database can be presented in several different ways in a variety of channels: for example, on Fass.se, the companies' own websites, medical records, pharmacies, mobile phones and print publications. This means that all users have access to the same updated information at the same time.

The basic information in the Fass database comes from an important neighboring system – *Nationellt Produktregister för Läkemedel* (NPL – the national product registry for medications). NPL was a joint initiative involving pharmaceutical companies through LIF, Apoteket AB, the Medical Products Agency and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Board, now the Dental and Pharmaceutical Benefits Agency. Basic information is automatically downloaded from the NPL to the Fass database once every thirty minutes. The pharmaceutical companies update information as it becomes available, and clinically important text updates are flagged for users. Other parties also contribute information to the Fass database: overdose information via the Swedish Poisons Information Centre, pregnancy and breastfeeding classification under the auspices of Uppsala University, pharmacy inventory status through the Swedish Pharmacy Association and articles on diseases from the online “1177 Vårdguiden” healthcare guide. Such collaboration ensures that the information in the Fass database is always current and quality-assured.

