
Permanent GTINs

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Permanent GTIN?

Permanent Global Trade Item Number (GTIN), also known as a non-reuse GTIN, are globally standardized product identifiers that, once allocated, are never re-allocated to another product no matter much time has passed.

Permanent GTINs are regular GTINs with the additional feature that they can never be re-applied to another product no matter how much time has passed

Permanent GTINs currently automatically apply to medical device and pharmaceutical products and are applied to products worldwide.

2. What is the difference between a Permanent GTIN and a standard GTIN?

Permanent GTINs *are* standard GTINs. They just have an additional aspect in that they can never be re-allocated to another product.

Standard GTINs can be re-used on another product if their original product has not been in the market for at least four years. Because permanent GTINs apply to products that have long term impacts on the people who use them, they are never re-allocated. This ensures traceability of applicable products.

[Permanent GTIN allocation rules](#) supersede normal GTIN allocation rules which allow GTINs to be reallocated to new products after four years of non-use.

3. Why have permanent GTINs been established?

Because they are never re-allocated, permanent GTINs enable patient safety by allowing, product traceability to an electronic medical record

In addition, permanent GTINs support:

- Traceability of adverse reactions
- Product recalls and withdrawals
- Improved understanding of therapeutic effectiveness
- Improved product identification and handling

4. What types of products use permanent GTINs?

Currently, permanent GTIN rules only apply to regulated healthcare medical devices and pharmacy products.

These include:

- Pharmaceutical products that are regulated by Health Canada and have been assigned a:
 - Drug Identification Number (DIN), or
 - Natural Product Number (NPN), or
 - Homeopathic Medicine Number (DIN-HM)
- Biological (vaccine) products
- All implant and medical/surgical products designated as Class II – Class IV by Health Canada

Permanent GTINs apply to any and all products in these categories. This may range from regulated pharmaceuticals down to common items such as toothpaste and sunscreen.

5. How do I get a Permanent GTIN?

Permanent GTINs are not a specific GTIN type, Permanent GTIN allocation rules apply to how a product is managed.

That means, that if you have a product in one of the applicable categories, it already has a permanent GTIN. You will not be able to reassign this GTIN to another product even if you no longer manufacture the original product.

6. What happens if the permanent GTIN rule has not been followed?

The benefits that permanent GTINs provide would be lost and more importantly pose a risk to patient safety.

If permanent GTINs are not applied correctly, it becomes extremely difficult to trace products– putting patient safety at risk.

Patients may be using, or have used, products that could now be obsolete (such as an artificial hip implant or pacemaker). In the event of a product recall, it is critical that hospitals are able to quickly and accurately identify those patients affected by the recall. By tracing products quickly, we can help avoid patient suffering.

Also, complying with global GTIN allocation rules is expected by your trading partners. Organizations that are in violation of these rules be subject to corrective measures by their trading partners.

7. I had products that fit into the Permanent GTIN category, but have now been permanently discontinued? Do I still need to keep their GTINs?

Yes. This is essentially why Permanent GTINs are needed, so that even products that are not manufactured anymore can be traced in the event of a product recall or any other need to trace specific products.

8. What if my company is sold and/or merges with another company?

Permanent GTIN rules apply to specific products, rather than individual companies. To ensure product traceability, it is important to notify the new owners of your company about any products that fall into permanent GTIN categories. You should also make sure that they understand permanent GTIN allocation rules and their responsibilities.

9. What if we acquired a product line or company impacted by the permanent GTIN rule?

When acquiring a new company or product line, you should double check to see if any products fall into the Permanent GTIN categories. If they do, you will need to maintain the permanent GTINs for these products even if you choose not to manufacture them anymore.

10. What do organizations need to consider when applying permanent GTIN rules to their products?

Manufacturers of products affected by permanent GTIN rules will need to establish internal processes for their GTIN assignment and maintenance.

Manufacturers should ensure that they are subscribing to the correct length of Company Prefix. This is to enable them to create as many GTINs as they will need both now and in the future, considering that they will not be able to recycle permanent GTINs.

Should a company exceed the number of GTINs allowable under their current prefix(es), they can always apply for additional Company Prefixes.

11. Where can I find more information about Permanent GTINs?

You can engage with education and training materials about permanent GTINs by [visiting GS1 Canada's Learning Zone](#).

You can also [visit the permanent GTIN page](#) of the GS1 Canada website.

To get answers to more specific questions, please contact the GS1 Canada GTIN Ombudsman by emailing gtinombudsman@gs1ca.org.