

Repeat Dispensing

At least two thirds of all prescriptions generated in primary care are for patients needing repeat supplies of regular medicines. Since 2005, repeat dispensing has been an Essential Service within the community pharmacy contractual framework. Under the service, community pharmacies will dispense repeat dispensing prescriptions issued by a GP and will store the documentation if required by the patient. They will ensure that each repeat supply is required and seek to ascertain that there is no reason why the patient should be referred back to their GP.

Despite the benefits that the service can bring to patients and the NHS, uptake of it has been very low in Hertfordshire. In order to increase the benefits being gained by patients and the NHS from this service, a new requirement in the community pharmacy contractual framework has been added for pharmacies to give advice to appropriate patients about the benefits of the repeat dispensing service.

Benefits of repeat dispensing for the patient

- Improved access to necessary medication.
- Ability to obtain necessary medicines efficiently.
- No need to remember to order medicines many days in advance of the current supply running out.
- No need to order all of their medicine portfolio just in case they run out before the next repeat is due.
- Regular contact with a pharmacist to discuss medicine related issues.
- Release 2 of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) includes an electronic approach to the repeat dispensing service. The EPS repeat dispensing service allows patients to change nomination between prescription issues. This is different from the paper based repeat dispensing system where all issues must be obtained from the same pharmacy.

Benefits of repeat dispensing for the prescriber

- Long-term reduction in workload and time spent issuing and reauthorising repeat prescriptions.
- Improved patient concordance and compliance.
- Reduction in waste, leading to reduced prescribing costs.
- Earlier detection of medicines related problems.
- Automatic return of patient for review when prescriptions run out. This can be done in conjunction with a Medicines Use Review and report of compliance and medication issues (if any) to inform the clinical review by the prescriber.
- Release 2 of the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) includes an electronic approach to the repeat dispensing service. The electronic repeat dispensing service offers the added benefit of allowing GP practices to cancel unused repeat dispensing prescriptions at any time.

Local example of Repeat Dispensing

“My pharmacy has a number of patients signed up to the repeat dispensing service. As a pharmacist I feel the repeat dispensing service improves patient contact. The service has enabled me to identify when medication is not been taken at regular intervals and make appropriate early interventions.” Karsan, *WareCross Pharmacy, Hoddesdon*

