

Patient Online - encouraging patients to order repeat prescriptions online

Why do it?

There are **many benefits** to patients ordering their own, and/or family members, repeat prescriptions online, particularly when the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) is also enabled. Practices with more patients registered for online services will:

receive **fewer telephone calls**, saving time that can be spent on providing quicker, more responsive services to those patients who can not or do not wish to use online services.



reduce costs by **eliminating prescription waste**, encouraging patients to avoid stock-piling and to only order the medications that they genuinely need.



have patients who become **more capable, self-sufficient** and less reliant on the practice staff to process their prescription orders.

improve patient satisfaction by providing a **more convenient** and seamless way to order repeat prescriptions.



Patients will also develop a greater understanding of their medications.

be providing a **safer service** for both themselves and their patients. Some requests for medication over the phone are not clear and can take considerable time and effort to clarify what is needed – online requests avoid potential confusion, transcription and medication issue errors.



have fewer visitors to the practice, **reducing footfall and shortening queues** – giving those patients who do need to visit the practice a better and more efficient experience.

What if:

Patients do not understand how to order medication online?

Please do:

-Provide patients with a prescriptions 'how to' guide so they understand how to use the system and include some basic visual instructions on practice website.
- Ensure staff know how the system works and can answer basic questions.

Patients order all items every time, despite not requiring everything?

Inform patients of costs and risks of stockpiling medication. Reassure patients that no changes will be made to their repeat medications unless the GP has discussed it with them.

How to do it?

Promote



- Use **promotional materials** to create eye-catching, informative displays – place them beside prescription box, check-in screens, reception counter and in consulting rooms.
- **Update your website** to include a link to the patient log-on screen online services for on the home page – include a banner “Save Time-Do It Online!” at the top of the page so it stands out. Include the link on the repeat prescription page.
- Make “order online” **the first option** on the repeat prescriptions page - describe it as “the easiest, safest and quickest way to order your repeat prescription is online register today!”
- Reception/prescription line staff to ask patients “do you use the internet?” If they answer yes, **ask for a current email address**. Encourage and inform of registration process and follow up with emails.
- Ask GPs and nurses to **promote online services in consultations** – especially with patients who are being issued with repeat prescriptions for the first time. They can professionally vouch for the patient’s identity for transactional services (appointments and repeat prescriptions).
- Change **telephone answer message** – “You can order your repeat prescription online ...”

Educate



- Ensure all practice staff **know how it works** and ask patients to register at every opportunity. Encourage them to register for online services with their own GP – it will help them to help patients.
- Make online the “**default**” way to order repeat prescriptions – for instance, automatically provide new patients with online registration details when they register at the practice.

Target



- Use **system reports** to identify all patients on repeat prescriptions who don’t have an active online account, practices can also include validated email address/mobile phone number recorded in the search.
- Use **bulk email/text messaging** to do targeted promotion with these patients.
- Run a **report periodically** to pick up any patients new to repeat medications.

More information:

- www.england.nhs.uk/patient-online
- <http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/patientonline>
- Email: England.patient-online@nhs.net

Order promotional materials:

Visit www.england.nhs.uk/materialsforpatient/ and order posters, leaflets, appointment cards, bunting, balloons and more, **free of charge**.