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.
- have patients who become **more capable, self-sufficient** and less reliant on the practice staff to process their prescription orders. Patients will also develop a greater understanding of their medications.
- 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.
- reduce costs by **eliminating prescription waste**, encouraging patients to avoid stockpiling and to only order the medications that they genuinely need.
- improve patient satisfaction by providing a **more convenient and seamless way to order repeat prescriptions**.
- 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.

What if:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patients do not understand how to order medication online?</th>
<th>Please do:</th>
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<tr>
<td>-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.</td>
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| 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://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-online)
- [http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/patientonline](http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/patientonline)
- Email: England.patient-online@nhs.net

Order promotional materials:

Visit [www.england.nhs.uk/materialsforpatient/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/materialsforpatient/) and order posters, leaflets, appointment cards, bunting, balloons and more, **free of charge**.