

28 DAY PRESCRIBING

Why your GP practice prescribes medicines at one month intervals



Supporting people in Dorset to lead healthier lives

If you are being prescribed medicines on a repeat prescription, then the amount of medicine you receive on each prescription may change. Your GP practice is changing to '28 day prescribing', which means that each time you get a prescription, you will receive enough of each medicine to last you one month.

What is the reason behind this change?

Research has shown that a very large amount of medication is wasted when doctors prescribe for two months (56 days) resulting in the loss of millions of pounds of NHS money. This money could be used to provide services elsewhere in the NHS.

The Department of Health supports one month prescribing and has said: "A 28 day repeat prescribing interval is recognised by the NHS as making the best possible balance between patient convenience, good medical

practice and minimal drug wastage".

How will 28 day prescribing affect you?

If you are being prescribed a "repeat medicine" your doctor will now start to prescribe enough of each medicine to last you for 28 days. For example, if you are taking 2 tablets a day you will receive 56 tablets, 3 tablets a day 84 tablets, 4 tablets a day 112 tablets etc.

Are there any exceptions?

There are some drugs which are packaged in 3 monthly amounts e.g. contraceptive pills and hormone replacement therapy (HRT). These will continue to be supplied in this way.

What are the benefits of 28 day prescribing?

You will always start (and finish), the container of each medicine on the same day of the week. In this way, it will be easier for your doctor

to review all of the repeat medicines you are taking and to see if you might be having problems with any of your medicines.

Companies already manufacture a large number of medicines in 28 day 'calendar packs' that show the day of the week on the packaging. This packaging allows you to check and monitor that you have taken your medication each day. These packs also have patient information leaflets inside and ideally the pack should not be broken into as they are designed to be supplied with this information included.

28 day prescribing reduces the amount of medicine which is currently wasted when medicines are stopped or changed by doctors. It also reduces the amount which is wasted when partly filled containers are thrown away.

At the moment, a large number of patients make

several visits a month to the surgery because their medicines run out at different times. As you will finish your medicines all at the same time, you should only have to visit the surgery once a month to collect your repeat medicines. It will also reduce the likelihood of needing to make an emergency request if you run out of medicine.

Will it cost patients more?

The vast majority of patients collecting repeat prescriptions do not pay prescription charges; therefore there will be no difference to these patients in terms of cost. If you do have to pay prescription charges and you need more than 5 prescription items in 4 months (or 14 prescription items in 12 months), the best way to pay for your prescriptions would be to obtain a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC). Ask at reception for more information.

Summary

28 day prescribing has important benefits for patients. The way you take your medicine will remain the same, only the amount of medicines you receive on each prescription will change.

All medicines should last for the same number of days. If you are running out of some items or have too much of some medication, please tell the practice.

Do not stockpile medicines at home; only order those items on your repeat prescription that you need. Return unwanted medication to your local pharmacy for safe disposal.

Further Information

If you have any questions on 28 day prescribing, or would like more information, please contact your GP surgery or ask your community pharmacist (chemist).

Alternatively, the NHS choices website at www.nhs.uk has lots of reliable medicines related information

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