



Batch Repeat Dispensing - a convenient way to get your prescriptions

If you or someone you care for use the same medicines regularly you may not need to get a new prescription every time you need more medicine. Instead you may be able to benefit from Batch Repeat Dispensing from the pharmacist. This means you won't have to visit the surgery or make an appointment to see the doctor or practice nurse every time you need more medicine.

Step 1

Talk to either your prescriber (doctor or practice nurse) or your pharmacist and ask them if you are suitable for Batch Repeat Dispensing. They will then ask you for permission to share information with your prescriber/pharmacist about your treatment. Your prescriber will give you a signed authorisation form (which is valid up to a year) and some Batch Repeat Dispensing issue forms. They will explain what these forms are for.

Step 2

The next step is to take the forms to the pharmacy when you need your first batch of medicine. Let the pharmacist know if you're taking any other medicines, or if your condition has changed recently. The pharmacist keeps your forms safely in the pharmacy.

Step 3

Next time you need more medicine, if the pharmacy is looking after the forms for you, contact them and tell them you need more medicine so they can have it ready for you when you go in.

Talk to your doctor, local pharmacist or practice nurse if you have questions and to find out more.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Repeat Dispensing and how does it work?

It's a different way that patients taking regular medicines can get them without asking their doctor for a prescription each time.

Your doctor will give you an "authorising" repeat prescription form (marked 'RA' and signed by your doctor) and a number of Repeat Dispensing issue forms ('RD', not signed). This form will authorise a number of Repeat Dispensing issues and may specify the intervals at which those repeats are to be dispensed.

Do I have to agree to a Repeat Dispensing service?

No. Although your GP has identified that you may safely receive your medicine through the Repeat Dispensing service, you don't have to agree to this and you can continue getting repeat prescriptions from your surgery.

Can any pharmacy provide the service?

You can choose any pharmacy that dispenses NHS prescriptions. You just need to make sure you use the same pharmacy each time you need more medicine.

What happens if I want to change pharmacy?

If for any reason you want to change dispensing arrangements, e.g. if you move house, then you will need to inform your surgery to make arrangements for a new Repeat Dispensing prescription to be produced. Your surgery will confirm with your previous pharmacy that any remaining instalments on your old prescription are cancelled and you will be asked to fill in another form indicating which pharmacy you will be using in future.

What do I do with the rest of the forms?

Your pharmacist can look after your Repeat Dispensing issues for you and they will then be stored safely and securely for you in the pharmacy. You can then request your medicines to be dispensed as and when you need them.

Alternatively, you may choose to keep the remaining Repeat Dispensing issue forms yourself and present each in turn for future supplies. If you lose any of the forms the pharmacy will be unable to supply you with any medicines and you will have to go back to your doctor to have a new set of prescriptions re-printed.

How long are these prescriptions valid for?

Most prescriptions are valid for a year. In some cases – for example if your prescriber wants to see you sooner – they may be valid for a shorter time.

What happens when my repeat dispensing prescription runs out?

Your pharmacist will remind you when you need to contact the surgery for a new Repeat Dispensing prescription. Your GP may ask you to make an appointment to review your condition before deciding whether or not to continue the Repeat Dispensing arrangements.

Is the pharmacist qualified to help me?

Yes. As well as doing a four-year masters degree, pharmacists do an additional year's training which covers the actions, use and side-effects of medicines. That means they're highly qualified to advise you on the medicines you're taking. Most pharmacists carry out medicines use reviews that support you in how to best take your medicines and identify any issues you may have.

Will I still be able to see my GP if I become ill?

Yes. You can make a GP appointment as usual or you may wish to discuss your condition with your pharmacist in the first instance.

What happens if my medicines are changed or new medicines are added to my current treatment?

If necessary your GP will contact your pharmacist to cancel any remaining batch issues and provide you with a new prescription for your updated treatment. In this way all your medication should be in quantities that make sense for re-ordering purposes.

Do I have to get all the items on my prescription at the same time?

No. Your pharmacist will check with you whether all the medication is required at each instalment dispensing. If an item is not dispensed it will be marked as such on the batch prescription form. You will be asked to confirm the number of items received by filling in the appropriate section of the batch form.

Can the pharmacist change my prescription without telling me?

No. The pharmacist can talk to you about your medicine, and help you with any questions or problems. But no one will change your prescription without talking to you first.