

Electronic repeat dispensing can benefit your practice

Maximising Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD)

- Two-thirds of prescriptions issued in primary care are repeat prescriptions. These repeat prescriptions account for nearly 80 per cent of NHS medicine costs for primary care
- 410 million repeat prescriptions are generated every year - equivalent to an average of more than 375 per GP per week
- It's estimated that up to 330 million or 80 per cent, of all repeat prescriptions could eventually be replaced with eRD. This could save 2.7 million hours of GP and practice time. eRD is recommended in the GP forward view as a digital workforce solution.
- For a 12,500 practice this is 1 hour per week of GP time per 12% of eRD. Time savings will be also be made within the admin team.

How does eRD work?

- eRD allows the prescriber to authorise and issue a batch of repeatable prescriptions for up to 12 months with just one digital signature.
- eRD stores all issues of the eRD prescriptions securely on the NHS Spine and automatically downloads them to the patient's nominated community pharmacy at intervals set by the prescriber.
- Patients are required to give their consent for repeat dispensing. However, this can be verbal and formal written consent is not required.
- eRD allows the cancellation at item or whole prescription level, which will cancel all subsequent issues on the Spine.

What are the benefits of eRD?

eRD simplifies the repeat prescribing process and offers a range of benefits including:

- Patients don't need to contact the surgery to reorder at regular intervals unless their condition changes.
- Dispensers are mandated to ask patients if they require all items on their prescription before each issue to avoid medicines wastage.
- eRD puts the prescriber in control rather than allowing the patient or dispenser to continue re-ordering unnecessary items which can lead to oversupply and stockpiling.

Getting started

- Communicate with your local community pharmacies; eRD is part of the community pharmacy contract and pharmacies can nominate suitable patients to help get you started. Useful NHS digital training for dispensers can be found [here](#)
- Consider the training requirements of practice colleagues. NHS digital training for practices can be found [here](#)
- Start slowly, ideally with patients on one or two repeat medicines such as levothyroxine or anti-hypertensive medicines that have remained stable for a number of months. This will help the practice to gain confidence in the system without too many queries or changes.
- Patients who are unstable or have frequent changes of medicines are not suitable for eRD.

Ultimately, it is the prescriber's decision about the suitability of patients for repeat dispensing and they choose the review period. It can be 3, 6, 9, or 12 months, but no more than 12 months.

References

Wessex Academic Health Science Network
NHS Digital. Full details available on request from medicines.question@dorsetccg.nhs.uk

Contact us

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