



Electronic Prescription Service - Moving from Paper to Electronic Prescriptions

Did you know that about 1.3 million paper prescriptions are issued every working day in England, with this figure set to rise by over 5% (65,000) each year? About 70% of prescriptions are repeats! To handle this volume more efficiently, the NHS is introducing an Electronic Prescription Service. In time, this service will allow your prescription to be sent electronically from your GP to the pharmacy of your choice. This will mean improved service, convenience and accuracy.

The service is being introduced in two stages.

Stage 1 – Adding a barcode

In the first stage you will still receive a paper prescription in the way you do now. The only change you will see is that your prescription will have a barcode and some numbers down the right-hand side.

These provide a unique reference for your prescription but they don't hold any personal information about you. They are only there to help the pharmacist dispense the items on your prescription more easily.

The new service will be more accurate, as the prescription information won't have to be re-typed into the computer at the pharmacy.

The first stage of the Electronic Prescription Service has been designed to make sure that everything works efficiently before the NHS introduces the full version of the service, so, for now, the way you collect your prescriptions or medicines won't change.

We will let you know when we have been selected to move to the second stage of the service.

Second Stage – Nominating a preferred pharmacy

You will be able to ask for your prescription to be sent to a pharmacy of your choice electronically, so you won't need a paper prescription at all – unless you want to have one.

This may save you time by reducing how often you have to visit the surgery simply to collect a paper prescription. In future, you will be able to go straight to the pharmacy to pick up your medicines.

As well as increased convenience for patients, this second stage of the service will also bring substantial improvements in efficiency for GP's, pharmacists and their staff.

Some Common Questions

How will I obtain my prescriptions?

During the first stage, in the same way as you do now. During the second stage there will be some changes to make it easier for you.

Will I still be able to use any pharmacy I want?

Yes, you will always be able to use any pharmacy. You will still have the option of collecting a paper version of your prescription from your GP and taking it to any pharmacy.

Will I need to know anything about computers to use the service?

No, your GP and pharmacist will be the people using computers to provide a better service for you.

Who will see my prescription?

The same people who can see it now. Whether information is on paper or electronic, everyone involved with your prescription has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

Will this affect prescriptions I receive from people other than my GP?

No, not yet. The NHS intends to include prescriptions given by other people such as dentists, nurses and hospital doctors eventually, but they are concentrating on GPs and pharmacists first.

Is there anything else I should know?

The Electronic Prescription Service is being implemented gradually to give everyone time to get used to the new arrangements.

Paper prescriptions are only being phased out slowly. Even when the Electronic Prescription Service is fully implemented a paper version of your prescription will continue to be available if you need one.

Over time, many people will see considerable benefit from the new Electronic Prescription Service.

Patient Involvement – How can you be involved?

A specially created national user group, meeting on a regular basis, has provided different perspectives on key design issues. This work has included looking at the live operation of the service in the initial implementer sites. Reviewing the early operational experiences at these sites will help to ensure that the potential benefits of the new service can be maximised. The output from this group is being used to inform communication and guidance material, as well as refining local system design. For more information please click on the link below

[The Patient and Public user group](#)

More information is available from www.cfh.nhs.uk/eps