

Important changes to the way “repeat prescriptions” are ordered from your GP practice

This information applies to those patients who have at least one medication that is a “repeat prescription” which you receive regularly without having to see your doctor each time. Depending on how you request your medicines, the way that it works for you may be about to change.

What is changing?

If medicine is ordered for you by your pharmacy or a dispensing company, you or your carer will now need to order it yourself directly from the practice. We will only be able to accept requests for repeat prescriptions from you or your carer (apart from in exceptional circumstances by agreement of your practice).

What is staying the same?

If you or your carer already order repeat prescriptions from the practice, you will not be affected. Pharmacies will still be able to collect prescriptions from surgeries, or receive them electronically, and they will still deliver your medicines to your door if that is your wish. ***If you want your pharmacy to deliver your medicine, let them know when you have ordered it.***

I am on the Repeat Dispensing Scheme – does this affect me?

No. If your GP has put your repeat medication onto a system known as ‘Repeat Dispensing’ then a special prescription has been sent to your nominated pharmacy which allows the chemist to dispense your medicines for up to a year without you needing to order them yourself so these changes do not affect you, however, please remember that if you are on Repeat Dispensing you should tell the pharmacy about any medication you don’t need so they can make the necessary adjustment(s) to the items they dispense.

When is this happening?

The changes will take place from **Tuesday 10th October 2017**

How can I order my medication?

The easiest way to order your repeat medicines is to sign up for Patient Access which provides secure access to the practice clinical system using a PC, tablet or smart phone. Patient Access allows you to order your repeat medicines, book and cancel appointments, access your test results and view your medical record. It’s very simple to sign up - just enquire at reception with a form of photo ID (eg., driving licence or passport) and proof of address (eg., utility bill, council tax notice, etc.,) and we will do the rest.

Alternatively, you can order your repeat medicines by dropping off your monthly prescription request into one of our two posting boxes (NB., if you are ordering this way use the white tear off part of your prescription – this reduces the chance of error and gives you the opportunity to cross off any medicines you don’t need that month)

Please only order the medication you need and don't order until you have approximately 7 days of medicines left. Please allow at least 2-3 working days for your prescription to be issued and don't leave it until the last minute.

Why is this happening?

The change will mean that your GP has a better ability to monitor and control what medicines you do and do not use. This will help your discussions about choosing the right medication.

This change will also help address a serious safety concern. Under the old system some patients found that they began to build up a stock of unused medicine that had to be stored safely and used within date. The new system will give you more control.

It is important that NHS money is used as efficiently as possible. We hope to save a large amount of money on unused medicines, money that will be used to benefit the health of the people of St Helens. Medicines that are not taken and are therefore wasted cost the NHS £300 million per year. Locally in St. Helens this waste equates to approximately £1 million.

Could I be signed up for Repeat Dispensing?

Ask about signing up for Repeat Dispensing next time you visit the Doctor. Many of our patients find this scheme advantageous because their GP can prescribe medication for up to a year without them needing to order it, and, by advising their pharmacy when they intend collecting their medicines, the chemist can usually prepare them ready for collection which helps to avoid a lengthy wait. (**Please note:** not everyone is a suitable candidate for repeat dispensing).

Who to contact if you need more information or support

If you feel you might need support ordering your repeat prescription or you know someone who might need help, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

- Phoning 0800 218 2333 (normal hours 9am - 5pm, Mon to Fri). A voicemail system operates at busy times and out of hours and we will endeavour to return your call by the next working day.
- Emailing mlcsu.pals@nhs.net
- Or writing to: Medicines Management Team, St Helens CCG, St Helens Chamber, Salisbury Street, off Chalon Way, St Helens WA10 1FY
- If you have any questions about ***Repeat Dispensing***, please contact the practice directly.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is available at www.sthelensccg.nhs.uk

Please note: We had to ensure that every patient who may be affected received a letter, so your household may have received more than one copy of this letter.