

Advantages and disadvantages of three methods of supplying repeat medicines

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Comments
Patients reordering their own repeat prescriptions	<p>Patients know what they are running out of, and can avoid re-ordering medicines they don't need</p> <p>Gives prescriber some information on patients' medicines-taking compliance</p> <p>Easy for most patients, especially if they can reorder using a computer or smartphone</p> <p>Fewer prescription queries than when pharmacies reorder on patients' behalf</p>	<p>Practice has to generate a repeat prescription every time the patient is running out of medicine.</p>	<p>Practices could consider extending the duration of prescriptions for stable, long-term treatment, e.g. by 1 month, taking a view on the risk of increased waste versus reduced workload.</p> <p>Ticking medicines they need on a repeat prescription request slip is an alternative to requesting using a computer or smartphone</p>
Electronic repeat dispensing, with prescriptions dispensed in instalments	<p>Reduces the number of prescriptions the practice has to generate</p> <p>Easy for most patients</p>	<p>Waste - if medicines the patient has stopped taking, or is not running out of, are dispensed. (See appendix 1, above)</p> <p>Not a good method for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients with an unstable medicines (or dose) regimen or frequent hospital admissions • Short-term treatment • CDs schedule 2 or 3 • Unlicensed medicines 	<p>Reserve for patients on stable therapy which is expected to remain stable until the next scheduled review.</p> <p>For many patients, it will not be sensible to use electronic repeat dispensing for <i>prn</i> medicines.</p>
Community pharmacies ordering repeat prescriptions on the patient's behalf	<p>Works for some patients who cannot reorder their own repeat medicines, and who do not have a friend or carer who can order for them</p> <p>Easy for patients</p>	<p>In areas that have audited, associated with more over-ordering than when patients request their own repeat prescription.</p> <p>Waste - if medicines the patient has stopped taking, or is not running out of, are dispensed. (See appendix 1, above)</p> <p>Likely to give the GP less indication of patients' medicines-taking compliance</p>	