

## **A Guide to 28-Day Prescribing**

### **What is the reason for 28-day prescribing?**

28-day prescribing is recognised by the NHS as making the best possible balance between patient convenience, good medical practice and minimal drug wastage.

### **What does 28 day prescribing mean for you?**

When you are being prescribed a repeat medicine your doctor prescribes enough of each medicine to last you for 28 days. For example, if you are taking 2 tablets a day you will receive 56 tablets, 3 tablets a day 84 tablets, 4 tablets a day 112 tablets etc.

### **Are there any exceptions?**

A few medicines are packaged in a manner that makes them unsuitable for 28-day prescribing. Examples include some inhalers, insulin vials, oral contraceptives and hormone replacement therapy.

### **Weekly (7 day) prescribing**

Decisions to prescribe to a shorter interval than 28 days are made on clinical grounds. When a new medicine is prescribed, it might be prescribed for 7 or 14 days to check that it works or if there are any unwanted effects. 28-day prescribing is appropriate for patients using a multiple compartment compliance aid unless there is a clinical reason for weekly (7 day) prescribing.

### **What are the benefits of 28-day prescribing?**

You will always start (and finish), the container of each medicine on the same day of the week. In this way, it will be easier for your doctor to review all of the repeat medicines you are taking and to see if you might be having problems with any of your medicines. Companies already manufacture a large number of medicines in 28 day 'calendar packs' that show the day of the week on the packaging. This packaging allows you to check and monitor that you have taken your medication each day. These packs also have patient information leaflets inside and ideally the pack should not be broken into as they are designed to be supplied with this information included.

28-day prescribing reduces the amount of medicine which is wasted when medicines are stopped or changed by doctors. It will also reduce the likelihood of needing to make an emergency request if you run out of a medicine.

### **What about cost?**

The vast majority of patients collecting repeat prescriptions do not pay prescription charges. If you pay prescription charges a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC) will save you money if you have more than 3 prescription items in 3 months and the 12 month certificate will save you money if you have more than 11 prescription items in 12 months.

### **What about convenience?**

The NHS electronic Repeat Dispensing service provides a convenient method of collecting your medicines direct from the pharmacy without the need to order from your GP surgery every month. If you are interested in this service, and to enquire if it is suitable for you, please ask at the Dispensary.

**What about holidays and travelling abroad?**

You may receive prescriptions to cover your time abroad. This is at the discretion of the surgery but must be for no longer than three months.

**Summary**

28-day prescribing has important benefits for patients. All medicines should last for the same number of days. If you are running out of some items or have too much of some medication, please tell the GP Practice. Do not stockpile medicines at home; only order those items on your repeat prescription that you need. Return unwanted medication to your local pharmacy for safe disposal.