



The Voice of
Gloucestershire Pharmacies

In Brief

FAXED PRESCRIPTIONS

A fax of a prescription does not fall within the definition of a legally valid prescription because it is not written in indelible ink and has not been signed by a prescriber. The NHS (GMS Contracts) Regulations 2004 [SI 2004 No 291 – as amended], and parallel PMS regulations, Schedule 6 Part 3 state a very clear requirement on GMS and PMS NHS prescribers to issue a form FP10, and no reference is made to validity of faxed forms. The patient or his representative would normally need to be able to sign the original FP10 as part of the dispensing and checking process.

A fax can, however, confirm that at the time of receipt a valid prescription is in existence. Many pharmacies prefer to receive a faxed prescription than to have the prescription “phoned through”. Having a copy of the prescription is a useful record; it reduces the risk of transcription error which could occur if they misheard the caller. A pharmacist is not obliged to dispense against a faxed prescription, but where the decision is taken to do so, the pharmacist must be sure of the integrity of the original prescription and that it will be in their possession within a short time – under the GPhC Emergency Supply regulations, within 72 hours. Pharmacies should not receive a fax without also receiving a phone call from the surgery to satisfy that the GP has requested the supply, and that the fax has been received.

The NHS (GMS Contracts) Regulations - Paragraph 39 of Part 3 supported by the GPhC Emergency Supply regulations, allows the prescriber to SPEAK to the pharmacist personally to order an urgent or emergency prescription, which is not for a Controlled or Scheduled drug, provided the prescriber provides the pharmacist with a FP10 within 72 hours. The importance of the telephone call is that the two persons actually speak and can ask each other relevant questions before the prescription is dispensed.

There are separate provisions for the supply of controlled drugs and under no circumstances can a pharmacist dispense a Schedule 2 or 3 drug against a fax, other than to prepare the medication before receipt of the valid prescription, to avoid unnecessary delay.

Faxing should not be used for convenience. Faxed through prescriptions are often the result of patients requesting the prescription urgently because they have no medication left. Patients who always wait until they have run out of tablets before they order their prescription are potentially a candidate for a Medicines Use Review.

If the patient is stable and compliant with their medication but forgets to order their prescription or cannot easily get to the surgery to pick it up Repeat Dispensing may be a solution.

Electronic transfer of prescriptions should reduce the need for faxing and will be rolled out across Gloucestershire by 31st March 2014 for surgeries with compliant systems.

FAXED NHS FP10 PRESCRIPTIONS TO COMMUNITY PHARMACY

Faxed NHS script is exceptionally required
[may be necessary for OUT OF HOURS]
Patient nominates a Pharmacy

*Faxed scripts should only occur in **exceptional circumstances** where an urgent need for the medication and impractical for the script to be collected in advance*

Out of Hours manual:
Pharmacy details copied/paste into 'drug dosage line' or Right Hand Side of script form

***Excludes CDs:**
CD scripts can only be faxed to verify existence of the script in order to check stock & prepare dispensing

GP/ Prescriber *speaks to pharmacy

- Checks pharmacy is open
- Checks fax number
- Checks pharmacy address
- *Discusses script request with Pharmacist, and any issues arising e.g. availability of stock

Pharmacy confirms
contact number to call if
no fax received within
10mins

Pharmacy checks fax
machine has paper & ink
loaded

Script is prepared, *signed by GP/
Prescriber

Fax Cover sheet contains:

- Nominated pharmacy
- Patient details
- Prescriber Name and professional access contact telephone number - to get back in touch with prescriber

Fax Cover sheet & Script faxed to
nominated pharmacy

If fax not received
by pharmacy within
10mins, pharmacy calls
Prescriber

NB:
* denotes aspects of NHS
Emergency Supply law

Original script given to secretary to
send by post to nominated pharmacy
for receipt within *72 hours

Useful Contacts:

- **Out of Hours:** Pharmacist seeking advice concerning prescriptions with a patient waiting in Pharmacy for a response: **Call 01452 726456 (Professional use only – NOT for the public)**
- Pharmacy contact details maintained by Out of Hours: denise.keeling@glos.nhs.uk / julie.french@glos.nhs.uk
- Patients with complaints should be directed to **Healthwatch service** on 0800 652 5193 | 01452 504989

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