

Electronic Repeat Dispensing

(eRD): Dispenser Guide*

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Information and technology
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* Throughout this document, the term ‘dispenser’ or dispensary refers to dispensing appliance contractors, pharmacies and dispensing staff.

Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD) allows the prescriber to authorise and issue a batch of repeatable prescriptions for up to 12 months with just one digital signature. Once the service is set up, the patient’s nominated dispenser receives the issues at intervals specified by the prescriber.

Patients will benefit from regular contact with their dispenser, who will be responsible for checking that their circumstances haven’t changed since the previous issue of the prescription was collected. Dispensers will also ask whether the patient needs all of the items on their prescription, in order to avoid medicines being wasted. **eRD requires the dispenser to ask the following questions each time the eRD prescription is dispensed:**

- Have you seen any health professional (GP, nurse or hospital doctor) since your last repeat was supplied?
- Have you recently started taking any new medicines - either on prescription or that you have bought over the counter?
- Have you been having any problems with your medication or experiencing any side effects?
- Are there any items on your repeat prescription that you don’t need this month?

Based on the patient’s answers to these questions, the dispenser will make a clinical decision to either dispense the medication or refer the patient back to their prescriber. If a patient does not require an item, the dispenser will mark it as “Not Dispensed”.

“eRD secures repeat business and helps us to look after our customers better. We have changed our processes and we can now manage our workload better.” Mike Williams, Prestwich Pharmacy, Bury

Any patient who is suitable for a repeat prescription could be suitable for eRD. This includes, but is not limited to patients:

- on stable therapy

- on short term medication e.g. until their condition is reviewed
- with long term conditions
- on multiple therapy e.g. hypertension, diabetes, asthma etc.
- who can self-manage their seasonal conditions appropriately.

The benefits of eRD for dispensers

- Improved stock control – the issues of an eRD prescription are downloaded 7 days before they are due, allowing time to order in any out of stock items and to prepare the prescription in advance of the patient arriving.
- Increased efficiency and more predictable workload.
- Reduced time spent collecting paper prescriptions from prescribing sites.
- Dispensers use their clinical skills to manage eRD prescriptions, which helps to enhance their professional long-term relationship with patients and prescribers.
- No need to retain and store paper repeatable prescriptions and batch issues.
- Electronic reimbursement reduces the workload at the end of the month.
- Subsequent issues of an eRD prescription are automatically cancelled when the Personal Demographics Service (PDS) is updated with notification of a death.

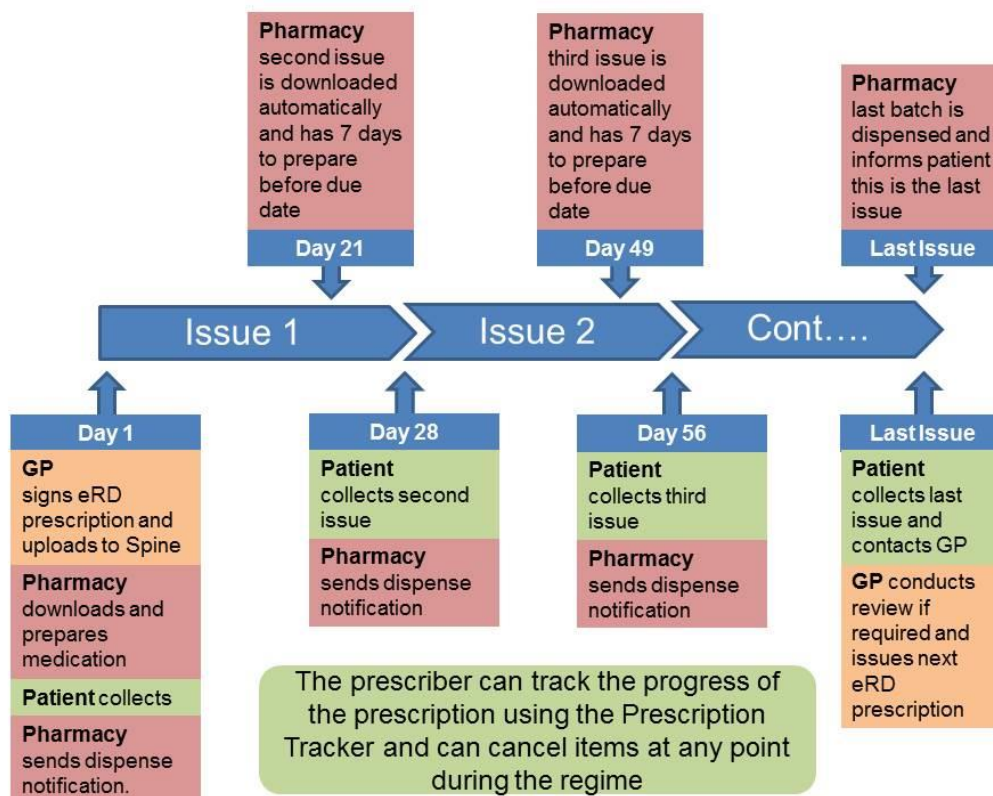
“eRD makes it easier to alter scripts and communicate any changes to pharmacy.”
Dr Tim McMinn, Sackville Medical Centre East Sussex

How eRD works

eRD stores all issues of the eRD prescriptions securely on the NHS Spine and delivers them to the patient’s nominated dispenser at the intervals set by the prescriber. The prescriber retains the ability to change or cancel the prescription at any time.

The first issue is available on the NHS Spine as soon as it is signed and the subsequent issues are automatically downloaded to the nominated dispenser 7 days before their due date, (provided the dispense notification for the previous issue has been sent), to allow time to order out of stock items and prepare the prescription.

The following diagram shows the process for a 28 day prescription.



The facts about eRD

- Patients can **only use eRD if they have an Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) nomination**. However, they can change their nomination at any time during the duration of the eRD prescription. If the original pharmacy has downloaded the subsequent issue of the prescription before the nomination has changed, they must return the script to the Spine to allow the newly nominated pharmacy to retrieve it.
- If it is clinically appropriate, the subsequent issues of the prescription can be manually downloaded from the Spine and dispensed in advance of the due date. **The next issue is available** once the dispense notification has been sent for the previous issue. This could be useful, for example, when patients are going on holiday.
- **“When required” medication** can be prescribed via eRD. The prescriber can set the repeat intervals based on the predicted number of uses/doses. If the patient runs out, the pharmacist can make a clinical decision and request the subsequent issue early. This may result in the patient not having enough issues to last until their next review. The pharmacist should make the patient aware of this and advise them to contact their prescriber.
- The **EPS Prescription Tracker** can be used to obtain details of the eRD prescription. To use the tracker you will need the patient’s NHS number or prescription ID. Searching by

prescription ID will list all issues of an eRD prescription, as they share the same prescription ID number.

The status of the prescription changes as it passes from Spine to pharmacy to patient

Prescription ID	Status	Issue Date	Prescription Treatment Type
03E000A81036-6F7200	Claimed	09-Jul-2015	Repeat Dispensing (0003) Issue 1 of 6
03E000A81036-6F7200	Claimed	24-Jul-2015	Repeat Dispensing (0003) Issue 2 of 6
03E000A81036-6F7200	Claimed	01-Sep-2015	Repeat Dispensing (0003) Issue 3 of 6
03E000A81036-6F7200	Awaiting release ready	09-Jul-2015	Repeat Dispensing (0003) Issue 4 of 6
03E000A81036-6F7200	Repeat dispense future instance	09-Jul-2015	Repeat Dispensing (0003) Issue 5 of 6
03E000A81036-6F7200	Repeat dispense future instance	09-Jul-2015	Repeat Dispensing (0003) Issue 6 of 6

All issues have the same Prescription ID

EPS Prescription Tracker shows each issue individually

<https://www.digital.nhs.uk/electronic-prescription-service/rx-tracker>

- When the patient collects the final issue of their eRD prescription, the pharmacist should **inform the patient to contact their prescriber**. Surgeries will often schedule a patient review to coincide with the end of an eRD batch.
- Patients are required to give **consent for repeat dispensing**. This can be verbal as formal written consent is not required. Dispensers can be involved in highlighting suitable patients and gathering consent. This could be a local arrangement and requires a secure means of communication between the dispensary and surgery, such as NHS Mail.
- Schedule 5 and prescription only medication must be **dispensed for the first time within six months** of the effective date of the prescription and continues to be valid according to the directions on the prescription for a maximum period of 12 months. For Schedule 4 Controlled Drugs, the first issue must be dispensed within 28 days of the effective date.
- From the 1st December 2016, the repeat dispensing annual payment for dispensers will be replaced by the single activity fee. The single activity fee will subsume a range of dispensing related fees into one simplified payment.

This will include the following fees:

- professional fee (also known as the dispensing fee)
- practice payment
- repeat dispensing payment.

The level of the single activity fee can be found in the Drug Tariff.

- A recent legislation change means that the **Repeat Authorisation (RA) token is no longer required**, as all reimbursement claims are submitted electronically.
- **Electronic claims** can be submitted after a Dispense Notification has been sent for each issue of an eRD prescription. There is no need to wait until the final issue.

eLearning for dispensers

Electronic repeat dispensing is an essential service and is part of the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. The service specification requires a contractor to ensure that pharmacists are competent to provide repeat dispensing services. Pharmacists should also undergo appropriate training, for example, The Centre for Postgraduate Pharmacy Education (CPPE) programme and assessment. The CPPE produces an [open learning pack](#) on repeat dispensing.

Useful contacts

[NHS England Electronic Repeat Dispensing Guidance](#)

[NHS Digital Electronic Prescription Service](#)

[Electronic prescription tracker](#)

[PSNC information on electronic repeat dispensing](#)