

Instalment direction for schedule 2 or 3 controlled drugs

An instalment direction combines two pieces of information:

- Amount of medicine per instalment
- Interval between each time the medicine can be supplied

The Home Office has confirmed that an instalment prescription must have both a dose and an instalment amount specified separately on the prescription. The first instalment must be dispensed within 28 days of the appropriate date. The remainder of the instalments should be dispensed in accordance with the instructions (even if this runs beyond 28 days after the appropriate date). If the only date on the prescription is the date of signing, the first dispensing needs to take place within 28 days of this date. If the prescriber indicates on the prescription a date before which the prescribed medicine should not be dispensed, this would be the appropriate date instead. The prescription must then be marked with the date of each supply.

The instalment direction is a legal requirement and needs to be complied with. However, because there are acknowledged practical difficulties with missed doses and dates when the pharmacy is closed (e.g. bank holidays), the Home Office has approved specific wording to be used that gives pharmacists a degree of flexibility when making a supply.

The following wording allows a pharmacy to supply the balance of an instalment if the interval date is missed (i.e. if three days' supply was directed to be supplied on day 1 but it was missed, it allows two days' supply to be issued on day 2)

Approved wording for missed dose – supervised consumption

“Supervised consumption of daily dose on specified days; the remainder of supply to take home. If an instalment prescription covers more than one day and is not collected on the specified day, the total amount prescribed less the amount prescribed for the day(s) missed may be supplied.”

Approved wording for missed dose – unsupervised consumption

“Instalment prescriptions covering more than one day should be collected on the specified day; if this collection is missed the remainder of the instalment (i.e. the instalment less the amount prescribed for the day[s] missed) may be supplied.”

OR

“If an instalment prescription covers more than one day and is not collected on the specified day, the total amount prescribed less the amount prescribed for the days missed may be supplied.”

Approved wording if the prescriber wishes to ensure that the patient is not supplied with any doses – provided no more than three days have been missed

“Instalment prescriptions covering more than one day should be collected on the specified day. If this collection is missed, the remainder of the instalment (i.e. the total amount less the instalments

for the days missed) may continue to be supplied in the specified instalments at the stated intervals, provided no more than three days are missed.”

Approved wording for when the pharmacy is closed

“Instalments due on days when the pharmacy is closed should be dispensed on the day immediately prior to closure.”

NB: If the prescriber selects instalment intervals that take bank holidays or other closure dates into account, it may not be necessary to include this wording.

NB: If you decide to supply against a prescription that uses wording not approved by the Home Office, it will not provide the same protection from enforcement when making the supply. In this instance, if practical, you should try to get the prescription amended by the prescriber to include the approved Home Office wording.

Information taken from Medicines, Ethics and Practice, Edition 37, July 2013