

Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) FAQs

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Where is POD and how do I contact them?

The POD team is located at William Farr House in Shrewsbury. Our number is 033 33 583 509.

Calls to the POD are charged at a local rate – the same as calling an 01743 number. However if you have free calls or minutes as part of your phone package/contract, then the call will be free. The POD team is part of the NHS Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and is not employed by your surgery. We have access to your surgery medical records, but we cannot book appointments etc. All of your records are accessed securely and confidentially.

What happens when I call the POD team?

A dedicated call-handler will answer your call, ask you to confirm which surgery you are registered with, and then confirm your name, date of birth and address. Your medical record will be accessed, and the call-handler will ask you to confirm which medications you would like to order. We will not accept 'all of them' or 'everything'; we will need you to confirm each item separately. This is so that we can be sure that we are only ordering the items that you need.

You may be asked to confirm how much medication you have left in your possession, and what dosage you currently take. You should always check your medication cupboard before ordering, and re-order when you have 7 days left. Please do not order 'just in case'. If you need medications in the future you will be able to request them.

If you find that you have a build-up or excess of a medication, please let us know; we can adjust the quantities so that everything falls in line and you do not need to make several calls to order.

You may be asked to confirm if you have stopped taking any medications that are on your repeat list, and we can remove these for you so that they aren't ordered in error in the future. We will confirm that we have ordered the correct number of items for you, and which pharmacy you would like them to be sent to. The request is then sent instantly via EPS (See What is EPS? below) to your GP who require 48 hours to authorise, then send to your nominated pharmacy to be dispensed. We cannot advise how long your chosen pharmacy will take to dispense your prescription. If you have an existing arrangement with your pharmacy for your medications to be delivered, please contact them to ensure that this will continue.

If there are any queries or we are requesting an item that has expired from your repeat list, the GP may need extra time to review your medical history.

There are certain circumstances where we will not be able to process your request and you will need to contact your surgery directly. We will always inform you if this situation arises. Please see the 'what CAN/CAN'T POD do' section for more information (<https://shropshireccg.nhs.uk/local-services/prescription-ordering-direct-pod/>).

What is EPS?

The Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) sends electronic prescriptions from GP surgeries to pharmacies. Eventually EPS will remove the need for most paper prescriptions. EPS allows prescribers to send prescriptions electronically to a pharmacy of the patient's choice. This makes the prescribing and dispensing process more efficient and convenient for patients and staff.

The benefits of EPS include:

- prescribers can process prescriptions more efficiently and spend less time dealing with prescription queries
- dispensers can reduce use of paper, have improved stock control, and provide a more efficient service to patients
- patients can collect repeat prescriptions from a pharmacy without visiting their GP, and won't have a paper prescription to lose
- Prescriptions can be tracked, to see where they are (waiting for authorisation from the GP, waiting to be dispensed at the pharmacy, or completed).

Can a representative (spouse, parent, carer etc) order my medication for me?

Yes – as long as they have all the relevant personal details that we require, and are able to answer questions about your existing medication balances. It is imperative that we protect your confidentiality so we cannot disclose any of your medical information to them.

I am going on holiday/leaving the country/working away etc and I need an extra supply. Can I order more medication?

The POD team are able to request an extra month's supply of medication when there are extenuating circumstances which mean that you will be unable to order/collect your prescription.

Requesting a prescription does not guarantee that the GP will authorise it – if you have any problems when you collect your prescription you should contact your surgery directly.

We can also send your electronic prescription to any registered pharmacy in England to be dispensed if you need us to.

What is the difference between an acute prescription item and a repeat prescription item?

An acute prescription item is a medication that you should only need one issue, or a short course of. An example would be a short course of antibiotics, which you would take for 7 days, and then the course is finished. You would not need to order them again.

A repeat prescription item is a regular medication that you will continue to take for an extended period of time, possibly for the rest of your life. You will have it on your 'repeat list' so that you can re-order it.

Repeat medications have to be reviewed every so often, so sometimes we need to check with your GP before they can be issued to you. This shouldn't cause you a delay in receiving

your medication, but it may mean that you are called into the practice for a medication review.

What if I don't want to or am unable to use POD?

There will be some patients for whom POD is unsuitable. There are still other options available which can be utilised.

- Online ordering through EMIS Patient Access – you will need to request a Patient Access code from your practice, which will be valid for 24 hours. You can then sign in and request repeat medications online.
- Written requests can be taken into your practice and handed in
- *Ordering through your pharmacy – this will only continue on a named patient basis, so for example if you receive dosette boxes, or have an arrangement with your pharmacy so that they take responsibility for ordering your medications when they are due, then this can continue.*

If you are unsure whether the POD service will be suitable for you or not, please speak to your usual Pharmacy staff.

Can you order my appliances through an outside contractor/supplier?

Certain items (e.g. stoma/continence products), are prescribed through your GP Practice and are supplied through an Appliance Contractor (eg. Charter, Coloplast) or in some instances through your local pharmacy.

We are able to request these items for you as before, and if they are delivered directly to your house, this will not change.

Will my pharmacy still deliver my medications to me?

If you already had an existing arrangement with your pharmacy to have your medications delivered, this should continue as normal. You will need to speak to your pharmacy directly to confirm your delivery date, as we are not able to check this for you at POD.

I have tried to get through to POD and my call is disconnected. Why is this?

Our queuing system will hold a certain number of callers before a message is played, stating that our prescription clerks are currently taking the maximum number of calls. We ask that you would try to call us back later in the day, or another suitable time for you. Our team is always growing to cope with demand, and following feedback from our patients, we have implemented this system to prevent waiting times reaching an unacceptable level.