



Explaining the Electronic Prescription Service

Information for patients and carers in England

About the Electronic Prescription Service	1
What is changing?	2
How does the Electronic Prescription Service work?	2
Which places can I nominate to receive my electronic prescriptions?	3
How do I nominate?	4
What happens once I have nominated?	4
Should I nominate?	5
Using nomination	5
Changing your nomination	6
What happens if I choose not to nominate?	7
Is the Electronic Prescription Service secure and confidential?	7
More common questions	8

About the Electronic Prescription Service

Did you know that around 1.5 million paper prescriptions are issued every working day in England? And that about 7 out of 10 prescriptions are repeat prescriptions?

To handle this number more efficiently, we are introducing the Electronic Prescription Service in England.

This new service lets your GP practice send your prescription electronically to the place you choose to get your medication or appliance from – without the need for paper in some cases. This means there is less need for people with repeat prescriptions to call at their GP practice just to collect a prescription form.

About the Electronic Prescription Service

What is changing?

The way that your prescription is passed between your GP practice and the place you get your medication or appliance is changing. Over the past year or so, you may have noticed that your prescription form has had a barcode printed on it. This means that it was produced using the first stage of the new Electronic Prescription Service.

Now, we are moving to the next stage of the service where there is less need for you to receive a paper prescription – unless you want one.

How does the Electronic Prescription Service work?

At first, if you want your GP to send your prescription electronically, you must choose, or 'nominate', a place to receive your electronic prescriptions. This could be a pharmacy, dispensing appliance contractor or your GP practice if you are entitled to collect medication from there.

Nomination works in a similar way to a prescription collection service where the pharmacy collects your prescription for you – instead of you having to collect it from your GP practice. The main difference with nomination is that your prescription will be sent electronically and you don't have to nominate a place that is close to your GP practice. For example, you could choose to nominate a place that is convenient to where you live, work or shop.

Which places can I nominate to receive my electronic prescriptions?

You can have up to three different places nominated at any one time, including:

- one pharmacy;
- one dispensing appliance contractor and, if you are eligible;
- your dispensing GP practice.

You can only nominate a place to receive your electronic prescriptions that is using the second stage of the Electronic Prescription Service. To make it easier for you to see which ones are offering the service, they will display the sign shown below.



Or, if you have access to the internet, go to www.nhs.uk and search for pharmacies and dispensing appliance contractors. This will also show which ones are offering the service.

How do I nominate?

There are three ways to nominate a pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor to receive your electronic prescriptions:

- you can ask a member of staff at any pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor that offers the service to record your nomination for you (it doesn't have to be the one you want to nominate);
- you can ask a member of staff at your GP practice to record your nomination for you;
- over time, you will be able to nominate online at www.healthspace.nhs.uk (you will have to log in).

If you are eligible to collect medication from your GP practice, your GP practice nomination can only be recorded by a member of staff working at that GP practice.

What happens once I have nominated?

Once your nomination is recorded, your GP will send all your future prescriptions electronically to the place you have nominated.

You should try to ensure you go to this place to collect your medication or appliance – unless you have made alternative arrangements with your GP practice. If you go elsewhere without making these arrangements you may experience delays in getting your medication or appliance.

Should I nominate?

Nomination is more suitable for some patients than others. This depends on your circumstances. Here are some points to think about when deciding whether you should nominate.

Nominating would suit me	Nominating would be less suitable for me
I receive regular repeat prescriptions. OR	I only need one-off prescriptions from time to time. OR
I tend to collect my prescription from the same place most of the time. OR	I tend to collect my prescription from different places. OR
I use a prescription collection service now.	I travel or work away from home often.

Using nomination

For repeat prescriptions

You should continue to re-order your repeat prescriptions from your GP in the same way as normal. However, instead of having to make arrangements to collect the prescription from the GP practice, the prescription will be sent electronically to the place you have nominated – meaning you don't have to collect the prescription from your GP practice first. You can then collect/receive your medication or appliance as normal.

For 'one off' prescriptions

You can use nomination for prescriptions that you only need to collect once, but as most are issued following a face-to-face consultation, it probably won't save you a trip to the GP practice.

Changing your nomination

Nomination is very flexible and can be changed or cancelled at any time. You can do this by either:

- asking a member of staff at **any** pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor that offers the service;
- asking a member of staff at your GP practice; or
- over time, logging into www.healthspace.nhs.uk.

If you have a repeat prescription, your GP or pharmacist can tell you the best time to change your nomination. This will ensure that your next prescription is sent to the right place.

It's important to remember that you don't have to use nomination on every occasion. If you don't wish to use nomination for a particular prescription you should let your GP practice know before the prescription is issued.

What happens if I choose not to nominate?

Nothing – you will continue to get paper prescriptions as you do now.

In the future, your prescription can be sent electronically even if you decide not to nominate. However, you will still be required to make arrangements to collect a paper copy of your electronic prescription. The place providing your medication or appliance will need this paper copy in order to process your prescription.

Is the Electronic Prescription Service secure and confidential?

The Electronic Prescription Service is reliable, secure, and confidential. Only authorised members of staff working in your GP practice, pharmacy and/or dispensing appliance contractor will be able to view your electronic prescription.

More common questions

When will I be able to start using the Electronic Prescription Service?

Different GP practices, pharmacies and dispensing appliance contractors will start using the second stage of the Electronic Prescription Service at different times. Your prescriptions cannot be sent electronically until your GP practice starts offering the service. Your GP practice can tell you when this will happen or look for the Electronic Prescription Service sign.

What is a dispensing appliance contractor?

Dispensing appliance contractors, while not able to supply medicines, do supply various appliances such as incontinence and stoma products.

Does using nomination mean I will see my GP less often?

No, it just means that you may not have to call at your GP practice just to collect a prescription.

My carer usually collects my prescription for me. Can they request for nomination to be recorded on my behalf?

Yes, but they will need to know some of your personal information such as your name, date of birth and address to do this.

I use my paper prescription to request my next repeat prescription issue. How can I do this if I don't receive a paper copy?

As electronic prescriptions are used more and more, GP practices may start offering different ways to order repeat prescriptions that will not require a paper copy of the prescription. However, if you do require a paper copy, simply ask for one when you collect your medication or appliance.

Do I need to be able to use a computer to use the Electronic Prescription Service?

No. The people who provide your prescription and medication will be using a computer.

Can I nominate a chain of pharmacies or dispensing appliance contractors?

You can only nominate a specific location to receive your electronic prescriptions.

Can I choose for my prescription not to be sent using the Electronic Prescription Service?

Yes, but if you decide not to use it, you won't be able to use nomination. This means you will need to continue to make arrangements to collect your paper prescription from your GP practice.

More information about the Electronic Prescription Service, including more common questions, can be accessed on our website at:

www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/eps

Alternatively, you can ask a member of staff at any pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor, or at your GP practice for more information.

Printed copies of this document and other materials can be ordered from:

www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/eps

or by phoning **08453 700760**

quoting reference number 4112