Electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD): An overview

Electronic repeat dispensing (eRD) means patients who regularly get the same medication don’t need to visit their GP practice every time they need a repeat prescription.

This provides greater efficiency for practices and patients whilst enabling the pharmacy to manage the patient’s clinical care.

Once a patient has been identified as suitable for eRD, the prescriber will review and synchronise all of their current medication.

The prescriber creates a regime of prescriptions then digitally signs it using their smartcard pin.

All issues within the regime are sent immediately to the Spine.

All prescriptions are linked by the same barcode, but they are all separate issues.

The duration between each issue is set in the clinical system. In this case it is 28 days.

The first issue is immediately available to the nominated pharmacy and will download on next nominated release request.

Pharmacy staff are required to ask the patient four mandatory questions before dispensing the medication to the patient.

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 time?

Based on the patient’s answers, the pharmacist will decide whether to dispense the prescription or get advice from the prescriber.

After the patient has received their medication the pharmacy sends the dispense notification (DN) to the Spine. Reimbursement for issue 1 can be claimed at any time after this.

Sending the DN for issue 1 activates issue 2 to become ‘awaiting release ready’.

As long as the DN has been sent between the time of prescribing and 7 days before the next issue is due, the next issue will download automatically to the pharmacy.

The patient returns to the pharmacy and is asked the four mandatory questions in order to collect issue 2.

The cycle repeats until the patient comes to collect the last issue of the regime.

The pharmacist explains that no more issues have been authorised, and the patient’s prescriber will need to authorise a new regime.

For more information visit [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/erd](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/erd) or email us on epssupport@nhsbsa.nhs.uk.

The information in this video was correct at the time of publication (September 2025)