Pharmacy department

Supply of medicines following your hospital outpatient visit

Overview
Your GP has sent you to the hospital specialist for their opinion and advice about the next possible treatment options for your condition.

When a specialist, hospital-only medicine or an urgent supply is necessary, the hospital doctor will usually give you an electronic prescription for dispensing at the hospital outpatient pharmacy; occasionally a green prescription that can be taken to your local community pharmacy may be offered instead.

If there is a change to your medicine(s) which is not needed straight away, or is one that your GP can manage for you, then you will be given a ‘Medicines Advice Note’ to take to your GP surgery. This gives your GP recommendations about your treatment from the hospital specialist. Please take this to your next appointment, or if you already take medicine(s), when you request your repeat prescription; there is no need to visit your GP immediately. This will be followed with a more detailed letter to your GP from the hospital specialist; sometimes your GP will want to wait until this letter arrives before prescribing a medicine.

Your GP will then make a decision on a treatment plan for you. This may include offering a different product to the one suggested by the hospital doctor.

Which medicines will be supplied by the hospital?
Normally only medicines intended to treat the condition you have been referred to the hospital for can be supplied. Medicines you are taking for other existing problems not related to your referral must be supplied from your GP, who knows your full medical history and why you are taking the other medicine(s). The hospital specialist may recommend changes and ask your GP to update your next regular prescription for these items.

Avoiding waste in medicines use
Medicines can be expensive; we are trying to reduce waste to help us treat everyone. Please follow the advice the hospital doctor gives you about when any change needs to be made. You may be advised to use up any medicine(s) you have left at home first.

Only order what you need from your GP; this is usually provided as a 28 day supply. Medicines cannot be reused once they have left a pharmacy.

Taking your medicine
Medicines must be taken as directed to get their full benefit. If you have not been able to do this please tell your GP or the hospital specialist as this may help in the understanding of your current problem.
Unwanted (side) effects
All medicines can cause side effects and/or sometimes the medicine prescribed will not work as well as expected. Your GP will monitor both of these effects carefully as every patient responds differently. This may mean a medicine will be stopped and an alternative offered, if there is a choice, or the dose may be increased or decreased to try and help.

If you are worried about a side effect please talk to your GP, pharmacist or nurse who will be able to advise you.

Stopping medicines
With some conditions a medicine may gradually stop working and there may be a time when the side effects outweigh the benefits. This will be discussed with you and the medicine will be stopped.

Further information
If you have any other questions about medicines supplied by the hospital, please contact the hospital pharmacy medicines helpline on 01223 217502, or your local community pharmacist.

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.
Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.