

Prescription writing in community prescribing documents



Purpose of this procedure:

This procedure has been written to ensure the safety of patients through minimising the risks involved in prescribing using community prescribing documents including prescription forms to be dispensed by a community pharmacist.

The Procedure:

- 1.0 Approved (generic) drug names should be used when prescribing. However in some cases prescribers may use proprietary names for prescribing certain items such as dressings and appliances. Where there is a possible difference in bioavailability of drugs made by different pharmaceutical companies, then the proprietary name must be used, for example lithium or sustained release preparations. Special care should be taken to avoid errors when prescribing compound preparations; in particular the hyphen in the prefix 'co-' should be retained.
- 2.0 As above and in addition, state:
 - the full name and address of the patient.
 - the age and the date of birth of the patient if possible. It is a legal requirement in the case of prescription-only medicines to state the age for children under 12 years.
 - dose and dose frequency. In the case of preparations to be taken 'as required' a minimum dose interval and maximum daily dose must be specified and the symptoms to be relieved.
 - if administration is less than once daily the day and frequency
 - When doses other than multiples of 5 mL are prescribed for oral liquid preparations the dose-volume will be provided by means of an oral syringe.
 - A prescription for a preparation that has been withdrawn or needs to be specially imported for a named patient should be handwritten. The name of the preparation should be endorsed with the prescriber's signature and the letters 'WD' (withdrawn or specially-imported drug); there may be considerable delay in obtaining a withdrawn medicine.
 - Unused space in the prescription area of the form should be blocked out.
- 3.0 The above recommendations are for any medicine prescribed. See the BNF for the additional requirements for controlled drugs.

- 4.0 Computer-generated facsimile signatures do not meet the legal requirement for a valid prescription.
- 5.0 Electronic prescriptions must meet the same standards.

Associated materials/references:

[The Safe Use of Medicines Policy](#)

[Prescribing in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society Procedure](#)

[Prescribing for children Procedure](#)

[Prescribing for older people Procedure](#)