

Guidance for Optimising Medicines Support for Patients Seven Day Prescribing and Multi-compartment Compliance Aids (MCA) Best Practice

Managing Medication Information Pack

The information in this pack is for all healthcare professionals to raise awareness of the wide range of support mechanisms available from community pharmacists that can be of benefit to patients and family or social carers looking for solutions to managing their medication. Healthcare Professionals should be mindful of “reasonable adjustments” covered by the Equality Act 2010 or when it would be appropriate for the patient to be charged.

Identifying why a patient has problems with their medication should be the first step to considering the most appropriate solution.

Consider the following:

1. Medication Review
2. Dexterity
3. Memory
4. Visual Impairment
5. Hearing impairment
6. Literacy problems
7. Language problems
8. Learning disability

Below is a list of some options that are available as solutions to the lack of compliance with medication regimes.

Medication Review

Refer patient to GP practice.

Dexterity

Large containers	These have a larger lid to improve grip in opening containers where appropriate.
Dossett boxes cups	These are cups that the patient can push over the relevant dose and it falls into the cup
Easy open tops	Non child resistant tops can be requested by the patient and agreed with the pharmacist.
Winged caps	Non child resistant tops with a wing attachment.
Pill press/Pill poppet (available to purchase)	Devices that enable medicines to be pushed out of blister packs.
Eye drop dispensers	Available on prescription to aid with administration of eye drops.

Inhaler aids	Aids to help patients grip, actuate or twist their inhaler device (available free directly from manufacturers e.g. Allen & Hanburys, Astra).
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Memory





Medication Reminder Chart	<p>A paper-based chart to summarise medicines, what they are for and when to take them.</p> <p>RPS Good Practice guidance for the production of MAR charts should be adopted for the Medication Reminder Chart. <i>The Reminder Chart is constructed on the basis of the current prescription together with information about repeat prescriptions for PRN medicines.</i></p>
Reminder Alarms	<p>Electronic devices are available to assist</p> <p>This includes phone apps and telemedicine</p>
<p>Medication Tick Charts</p> <p>Useful for people who may forget they have taken their medication or need help with a more complex regime.</p>	<p>A paper-based chart as above but the patient records, they have taken their medication. These charts are available on pharmacy computer systems.</p> <p>Copies of the patient's medication labels can be stuck onto the blank template. CQC has advised this should be overlaid with sticky tape to avoid tampering.</p> <p>Explain to the patient/ carer how to use the chart and advise them initially to bring it back the next month to discuss if they had any problems.</p>
Simplify Regime and counsel patient to improve understanding	<p>Work with surgery to simplify the process e.g. Change to once a day dose, alter strength.</p>



Visual impairment

Colour coding	<p>Coloured dots can be stuck on medication to indicate what it is for. A colour coded key must be placed on a separate sheet of paper for them to refer to.</p>
Large print labels	<p>Dependant on dispensary labelling computer.</p> <p>Font size 16/18 is classed as large. RNIB suggest Ariel font no smaller than 14.</p>

	It may be easier to print clearly on a large piece of paper in large font the regime for taking the medication.
Tactile identifiers	Attach something to the box/foil strip eg. elastic band, staples; tear in the lid of the box, in agreement with the patient.
Larger diagrams/pictures	Draw/attach pictures onto the box to signify when a medicine is to be taken e.g. sun for the morning or moon for at night.
Magnifying glass	Suitable magnifying glasses recommended by RNIB.
Braille	Do not stick dispensing labels over Braille information on medicines.
Braille products	<p>Braille labeller - based on a Dymo gun, prints letters and numbers as Braille characters on to a self-adhesive tape which can then be affixed to a carton or bottle.</p> <p>There are many professional Braille machines available to purchase and range in cost..</p>
Plastic labels	Basic tie on labels provided as a strip of plastic that can be attached to a container. Can be Brailled or used in conjunction with other labels or a felt pen. Historically, pre-printed Braille versions have also been available from the pharmaceutical industry. These are colour coded with the dosage instructions Brailled on the label which is then tied on to the container.
Plastic sheets	Available as sheets of self-adhesive plastic that can be embossed using a Braille machine.

The following pages list some of the medication aids to support patients with their medication. The list is designed to give an indication of what forms of support are available to patients. The NPA provides a comprehensive list of suppliers. Inclusion in this list does not imply endorsement by the NHS CCG, the LPC or the LMC.

	<p>Pill Punch Handy tablet removal device which comes in 4 sizes. Designed by a pharmacist to aid removal of most tablets and capsules from blister strips. Helpful for anyone who has difficulty in removing pills from blisters.</p>	<p>AAH & NPA</p>
	<p>PillPress Is a unique and innovative product that solves the frustrating problem some people experience when removing pills from blister packaging as the enclosed 'well' captures the pill when pushed through the foil pack by hand.</p>	<p>RNIB</p>
	<p>Grip it bottle opener Internal grip fits the bottle top while the outer surface fits comfortably in your hand. Great for removing most bottle tops.</p>	<p>The Disabled Shop</p>
	<p>Plain bottle tops/winged bottle tops</p>	<p>Local pharm wholesalers</p>
	<p>PillMate cutter Small, portable plastic pill cutter cuts tablets neatly and simply if they are too large, or are just too difficult to swallow whole.</p>	<p>AAH & NPA</p>

	<p>PillMate pill cut & crush Suitable for those who are unable to or have difficulty swallowing pills.</p>	<p>AAH & NPA</p>
	<p>Opticare Arthro 5 & 10 Perfect for users that suffer from arthritis or limited hand and shoulder mobility. Simply place your eye drop bottle into the dispenser and guide the drops into your eye accurately. Opticare Arthro 5 is compatible with most round and oval shaped bottles (2.5ml and 5ml) and is blue in colour. Opticare Arthro 10 is compatible with most round and oval shaped bottles (10ml and 15ml) and is cream in colour. Please note - this product is not compatible with Xalacom or Travatan eye drops.</p>	<p>Available on prescription</p>
	<p>Opticare eye drop dispenser Each dispenser is now supplied with a simple adaptor making it compatible with many non-standard bottles. Can clip on to most round eye-drop bottles from 5-15ml, commonly used by people with glaucoma. Ideal for people who have arthritic hands or anyone who finds it difficult to dispense eye drops. Please note - this product is compatible with Xalacom or Travatan eye drop bottles, as the dispenser is now supplied with an adaptor.</p>	<p>Available on prescription</p>
	<p>The Talking Label voice recorder Offers a simple and effective solution if you take multiple medications, as it provides audible guidance when you need to identify and take any medication.</p>	<p>RNIB</p>

	<p>Aid for administering eye drops Eyepiece attaches to dropper bottle ensures correct positioning over eye. Simply squeeze bottle to administer drops.</p>	<p>AAH & NPA</p>
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Please note that the following organisations based in Hertfordshire may be able to support patients:

- Herts Careline: <https://www.care-line.co.uk/home.aspx>
- Hertfordshire Independent Living Service <https://hertsindependentliving.org/>

NB Please note some services are chargeable.