

## **28 Day Prescribing Policy**

The NHS recognises that a 28-day repeat prescribing interval makes the best possible balance between patient convenience, good medical practice and minimal drug wastage.

The current Covid-19 concern has emphasised the need for continuity in the medication supply chain, which has been disrupted by increased demand for prescriptions for some medications.

The British Medical Association notes that “Prescribing intervals should be in line with the medically appropriate needs of the patient, taking into account the need to safeguard NHS resources, patient convenience, and the dangers of excess drugs in the home.”

Oldwood surgery remains committed to providing the best possible service for our patients, whilst supporting NHS resources. We shall therefore be amending all appropriate prescriptions to 28 day supplies.

The benefits of 28-day prescribing include:

- Reducing the amount of medicine which is currently wasted when your doctor stops or changes your medicine.
- Reducing the potential for error when your medication is changed in the middle of supply.
- Increased safety as you will not have multiple containers of the same medicine meaning it is likely to reduce the number of mistakes made by, for example, elderly patients, and it will also reduce the risk of potential poisoning of young children.
- Many medicines are supplied in 28-day packs, allowing you to check that you have taken your medication each day. You will start and finish the container of each medicine on the same day of the week, meaning it will be easier for your doctor to review all of the repeat medicines you are taking and to see when you have not ordered your medicines.
- Many patients have to make several visits each month to their surgery because they have run out of their medicines at different times. With 28-day prescribing you should finish your medicines all at the same time, meaning you will only have to visit the surgery once a month to collect your repeat medicines. It will also reduce the likelihood of needing to make an emergency request if you run out of medicine.
- Financial losses due to medicines waste represent a direct loss to patient care. Since 28-day prescribing reduces medicines waste, this in turn has a positive impact on patient care.

- Studies in the UK and abroad have shown significant savings and a reduction in waste with 28-day prescribing.

For some patients on certain medicines at a stable dose (e.g. contraceptives & HRT), your doctor may decide it is appropriate to issue prescriptions for prescribing intervals longer than 28 days. For medicines that are taken “as required”, or for creams and certain inhalers, your medicines may only be available on the normal repeat basis e.g. via the repeat slip, NHS app or email.

Most patients collecting repeat prescriptions do not pay prescription charges; therefore there will be no difference to these patients in terms of cost due to 28-day prescribing. If you do have to pay prescription charges, then it may be beneficial for you to buy a Prescription Prepayment Certificate, especially if you are taking 2 or more medicines on a regular basis. Details are available at <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/help-with-health-costs/save-money-with-a-prescription-prepayment-certificate-ppc/>

We thank you for your understanding in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.