

7 Day Prescriptions

A Guide for Community Pharmacies

7 day prescriptions may be appropriate if the patient:

Is prescribed medicines which are not stable for more than seven days and is on an MCA due to being assessed as requiring it under DDA

- Some drugs are unstable if removed from their packaging for longer than seven days.
- If these are required to go in an MCA then they will need to be dispensed weekly and as such will require 7 day prescriptions.

Regularly has changes in therapy (or is expected to) and is on an MCA due to being assessed as requiring it under DDA

- Community pharmacies are unable to alter the medication in an MCA once it has been delivered to the patient.
- If there is a subsequent change to therapy a prescription for the whole regime will need to be provided increasing waste.

Important:
Changes to existing patient's prescription length should only be done after communication between the GP and community pharmacist. This will help prevent unintended changes to patients' care.

Needs medication supplied weekly

- Community Pharmacies are not able to dispense in instalments on a FP10.
- Pharmacists must supply 4 "weekly MCAs" to a patient who has a 28 day script. This could lead to confusion in some patients and increase the risk of double dosing.
- Patients at risk should be supplied with shorter prescription lengths (i.e 7 days).

Which drugs are unstable when placed in an MCA:
There is no standard guidance available on the actual stability of drugs in medicines compliance aids (MCA) so professional judgement is required.
The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals Trust have published some general rules about which drugs should be excluded from MCAs:

- The majority of dispersible formulations
- Drugs which may cause skin reactions / hypersensitivity reactions (e.g. Chlorpromazine)
- All drugs with cytotoxic potential
- Drugs requiring special temperature control (i.e. fridge lines)
- Blister packs or containers containing drying agents which usually indicate the relative instability of the drug when exposed to moisture (e.g. Nicorandil)
- CDs should not be placed in MCA except in exceptional circumstances

7 day prescriptions are inappropriate:

To fund the provision of MCAs for patients who require them due to a disability

- Community pharmacies are obliged to make 'reasonable adjustments' for those patients who require it. This may not be in the form of an MCA.
- The form a 'reasonable adjustment' takes can only be decided by the community pharmacy (e.g. large labels, easy open containers).

To fund the provision of MCAs to those who require them for convenience

- Community pharmacies may decide to offer MDS to patients who do not meet the requirements of the DDA but who find them more convenient or for whom it improves compliance.
- Community pharmacies may also provide MCAs to assist those providing domiciliary care.
- These are not currently funded by the NHS and should not be funded by the provision of 7 day prescriptions.

Abbreviations:
MCA—Medicines Compliance Aid
DDA—Disability Discrimination Act