

Guidance for 7 Day Prescriptions

The treatment length of a prescription determines how often a patient receives their medication and is irrelevant to how the medicines are dispensed. 7 day prescriptions are for patients who need their medicine supplying weekly for clinical and safety reasons. A collaborative approach, with open communication, between professionals is recommended.

When are 7 Day Prescriptions Appropriate?

7 day prescriptions are often appropriate for patients who:

- Frequently require a change in medication, to reduce the risk of waste
- Are undergoing a period of titration or review of treatment
- Are considered to be at risk of medication overuse (e.g. due to self-harm or confusion) and it is not safe to provide them with longer than 7 days' supply
- There are stability issues with the medicine(s) supplied in a compliance aid*
- Has a documented clinical need (by the prescriber)

* The stability of some drugs is affected once removed from their original packaging and require a 7 day prescription when the drug is to be dispensed into a compliance aid. Some drugs are not suitable for dispensing in compliance aids. The Specialist Pharmacy Service [Medicines Compliance Aid database](#) includes drug stability in compliance aid information.

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

When are 7 Day Prescriptions NOT Appropriate?

7 day prescriptions are not appropriate and should not routinely be used:

- Simply to support the provision of a compliance aid (including dispensing GP patients)
- Simply because the patient is resident in a care home or has a domiciliary care worker

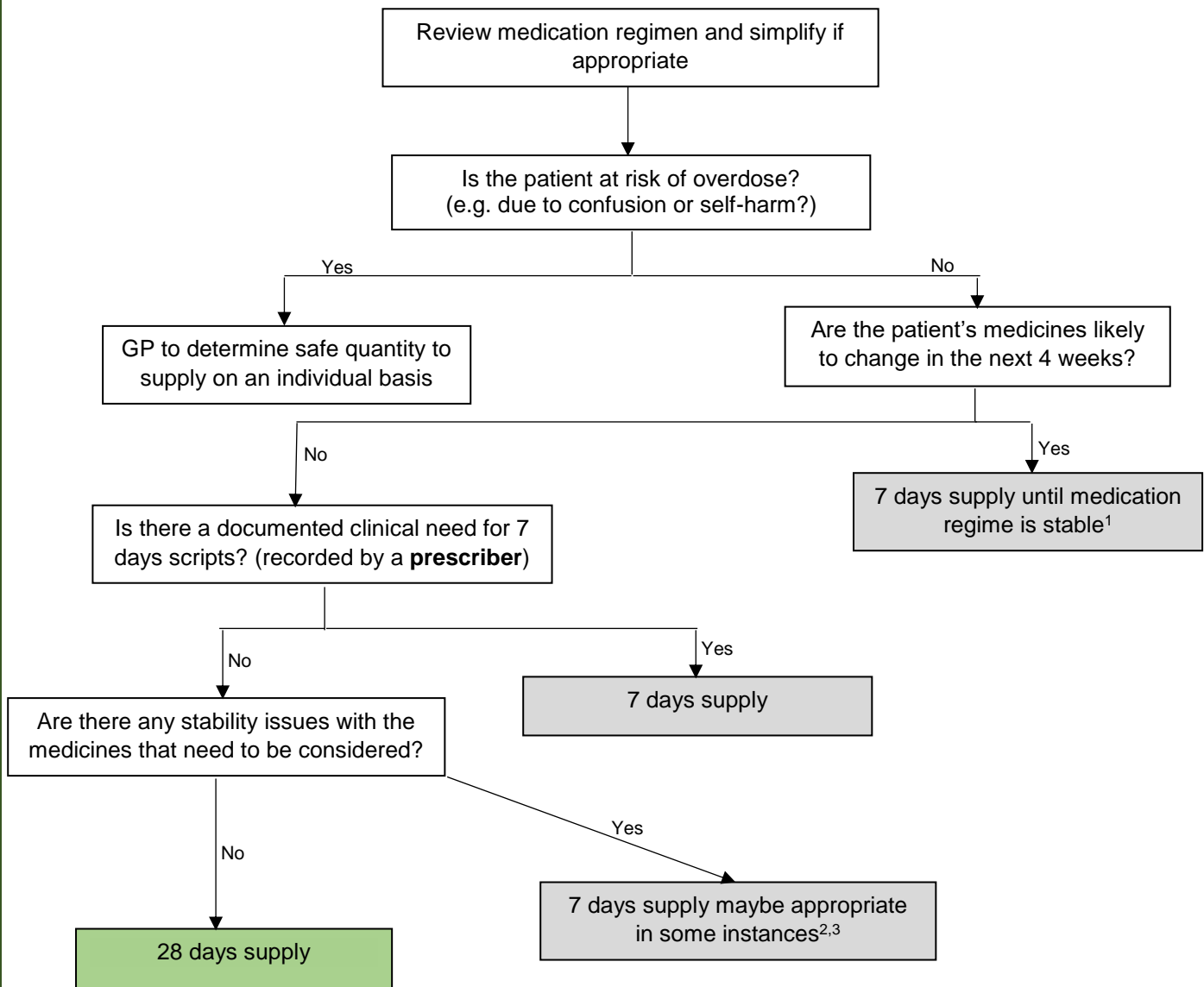
Points to note:

- 7 day prescriptions have the potential to increase workload for GP practices, unless electronic prescribing is undertaken via the Repeat Dispensing mechanism.
- 28 day prescriptions are appropriate for the majority of patients who are stable and for whom there are no safety concerns. GPs do not need to routinely provide 7 day prescriptions for patients who receive their medication in a compliance aid.
- The appropriate duration of supply is a clinical decision for the prescriber.
- The decision to supply a compliance aid is a decision for the community pharmacist.
- Dispensing into a compliance aid significantly increases the workload for the community pharmacy. Pharmacies are not paid any additional fees for dispensing into a compliance aid.
- Community Pharmacies are not able to dispense in instalments on an FP10 prescription.
- Where a prescription for 28 days is issued and the patient receives their medicine in a compliance aid the patient will receive 28 days medication in one supply, ie 4x7 weekly trays as one supply. This could lead to confusion in some patients.
- If 7 day prescriptions (or shorter) are considered a clinical requirement by the prescriber, they should be supplied weekly (or the prescribed interval) to the patient by the community pharmacy.
- Community pharmacies are unable to alter the medication in a compliance aid once it has been dispensed.

*If a 28 day prescription is issued and dispensed in a compliance aid, any changes made that month will require the **entire prescription to be re issued and re dispensed**.*

If a patient qualifies for help under the Equality Act 2010 and the pharmacy or prescriber assessment shows that a compliance aid is the most appropriate adjustment for how a prescription is dispensed, this can and should be issued from a 28 day prescription.

Decision aid to decide appropriate prescription length:



This flowchart is not exhaustive and is not intended to replace clinical and personal knowledge of the patient's circumstances.

1. If the medication is likely to change within the next 4 weeks, supply in 7 day intervals and reassess every 4 weeks. Once the medication is stable start the algorithm again. This will reduce possible wastage of medication.
2. Some medicines have a short shelf life (e.g. reconstituted antibiotic liquids, specials).
3. The stability of some medicines are affected once removed from their original packaging. For patients assessed as requiring an MDS under the Equality Act 2010, 7 day prescriptions may be appropriate if any of the medicines has short-term stability once removed from its original packaging and placed in an MDS.