

28-day Prescribing policy

Policy Summary

Three Chequers Medical Practice has a default 28-day prescribing policy.

This means that, in most cases, patients' prescriptions will be issued to them at a standard, 28-day interval.

Rationale

- NHS prescribing guidance has historically regarded 28-day quantities as best practice for prescriptions. This has been determined as the best compromise between patient convenience, environmental impact and preventing drug wastage.
- Medication errors are mitigated in the event that medication is changed mid-cycle.
- Many medications are supplied in 28-day calendar packs, allowing patients to start and finish a container of medication on the same day of the week.
- Limiting the impact and risks of drug stockpiling.
- Minimising the impact of drug shortages whilst reducing the risk to the drug supply chain

Exceptions

- Patients on certain medications (typically HRT and contraceptives) may be issued with a greater quantity of that medication, where the prescribing interval is usually between 3 and 6 months.
- Controlled drugs can only legally be prescribed for a maximum of 30-days; where these medications are supplied in 30-day packets, it is likely that the prescription length will be 30-days.

Payment for regular prescriptions

- Any patient that pays for their prescription and has more than one prescription per month is likely to benefit from Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC). In 2024, the charge for this certificate is £114.50 per year:
<https://www.nhs.uk/help-nhs-prescription-costs/nhs-prescription-prepayment-certificate-ppc>
- For patients receiving prescriptions for HRT, a specific HRT Prepayment certificate can be obtained.

Practice Dispensary Service

The Three Chequers Medical Practice runs a dispensary service, predominantly providing medications to rural patients in Winterslow and Porton, where there is not a local pharmacy.

If you live in any of the following villages you may be eligible for this service; please contact the surgery via email at prescriptions.3chequers@nhs.net, drop in a letter, or call us on 01722 336441.

Winterbourne Dauntsey	Winterbourne Earls	Winterbourne Gunner	Hurdcott
Porton	East Gomeldon	West Gomeldon	Figsbury
Firsdon	Pitton	Winterslow	Farley
East & West Grimstead	Alderbury / Whaddon	Coombe Bissett	Bodenham & Homington
Nunton	Odstock Village	Woodford Valley	Salterton and Netton

To run this service the practice also has to run a delivery van and employ a driver / deliveryman. We offer a delivery service to Pitton Post Office, Alderbury/Whaddon post office, Coombe Bisset stores and the Bridge Inn. This includes a home delivery service for those housebound and severely frail patients.

The practice does earn a small amount of money per prescription, in a similar way that community pharmacies do, which allows us to run this service and employ a small dispensing staff. The amount of money received by dispensing GP practices for each NHS prescription is typically less than that received by a community pharmacy (by around 12%), and with dispensing fees not being updated in line with inflation, this fee has devalued by around 20% since 2019.

General practice continues to face sizable, and worsening, workload and financial challenges, with further real terms pay cuts to surgeries this year. Whilst we appreciate the convenience for patients on long term medications to be prescribed in lengthier prescription durations, a change of this nature would regrettably threaten the viability and sustainability of community pharmacies and dispensaries.

