

Homecare medicines service

This leaflet explains more about our homecare medicines service. The service is available to patients who have been prescribed certain medicines. If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this leaflet, please speak to a member of staff caring for you.

Throughout this leaflet the terms 'you' or 'your' refer to either yourself (as the patient) or to your child/dependent (when they are the patient).

How does the homecare medicines service work?

Some medicines prescribed by the hospital can be delivered directly to your home address or to an alternative address that is convenient for you (for example your workplace). This means that you will not have to wait to have your medicine dispensed in the hospital pharmacy or carry it home.

The hospital will send the prescriptions to the homecare company to be dispensed and delivered to you. Any other medicines will be supplied in the usual way – either by the hospital pharmacy or on a GP's prescription supplied from your local pharmacy. The hospital staff caring for you will let you know what you need to do, so please ask them if you are unsure.

The homecare medicines service does not affect other aspects of your care and you must still attend your clinic appointments or participate in all follow up consultations (e.g. telephone, email, Skype® clinics) and any required monitoring (for example blood tests).

Who can use the service and how do I register?

The homecare medicines service is only available for certain medicines. The clinical team at the hospital will discuss the service with you and ask questions to check if it is suitable for you. To use this service you must be contactable on a mobile or landline telephone.

The homecare delivery companies are currently only able to offer their services in English. If necessary, you may need to designate a family member or friend who speaks English to be contacted on your behalf.

The clinical team will help you complete the registration form for the service. They will also ask for your consent to use the service. We need your consent to share your information with the home delivery company, so they can set up your account and arrange your deliveries.

You may withdraw from the service at any time by contacting your hospital clinical team. This will not affect your future care.

Who will provide my medicines/treatment?

The service is provided by private companies that are registered to provide medicines and medical treatments. The company we use will depend on which medicine or treatment you are receiving. If we change the homecare company we use, we will let you know. The homecare company will provide a reliable, professional service and will

keep your details confidential. Once registered with the homecare company you will receive an information pack.

This will include contact details for a dedicated customer service team, who you can call if you have any questions or concerns about the delivery of your medicines.

For some treatments the homecare company may help train patients and carers how to administer the medicines. The clinical team at the hospital will give you more information if this applies to you.

How will my medicines be delivered?

The homecare company will contact you each time you have a new prescription, to arrange the delivery of the medicine. Deliveries are usually scheduled to arrive when you have around two weeks' supply of medicine left. They are usually made between 8am and 6pm from Monday to Friday (the specific day/time will depend on your geographical location and discussion with the homecare provider).

Homecare providers may offer you the option to choose your delivery slot online or by telephone. The information pack supplied by the homecare provider will provide details if this option is available.

Most companies offer a text message service on the day of delivery so that you will know exactly what time to expect your medication. The deliveries are made by drivers who will all carry identification cards and drive unmarked vans, and understand the need for discretion and confidentiality. You will receive your medicines in plain delivery packaging.

All deliveries will require a signature upon receipt. This can be yourself or your designated representative (who must be aged 16 or older). You will be asked when you set up the homecare medicines service if you want to nominate a designated representative. If you need to change your representative, please contact the homecare company as soon as possible to prevent any problems with the delivery.

If you or your representative is unable to take delivery at the scheduled time please try to contact the homecare company at least 48 hours in advance. You will need to rearrange delivery with the homecare company.

Once you join the homecare medicines service, the first delivery may take a number of weeks to process. If necessary, your doctor will give you a prescription to be dispensed at the hospital pharmacy to ensure you have medicines during this period.

What do I need to do?

Although you may not need to come to the hospital for prescriptions, you must attend your attend your clinic appointments, participate in any follow up consultations (eg telephone, email, Skype® clinics) and any monitoring (for example blood tests). We will not be able to issue prescriptions without these check-ups, so failure to come to appointments or follow up consultations can result in a break or delay in receiving treatment.

You must make sure that you (or your designated representative) are available at the scheduled delivery time. If you need to change or discuss your delivery date or delivery address. You must contact the homecare company **as far in advance as possible** to ensure you get a suitable alternative delivery slot.

The home delivery company may need to contact you, please note that these calls will be from a withheld number. If the homecare delivery company cannot contact you, your medicines supply may be put on hold until they have been able to do so.

Please tell your home delivery company if you get down to **less than two weeks** supply of medicines, so there is enough time to arrange your delivery before you run out. Also please let them know if you have more medicines than you need.

What if my address or telephone number changes?

You must let the hospital clinical team and pharmacy staff (when handing in a prescription) know if your address or contact details change. You must also contact the homecare company directly to let them know the new contact information. If you would like to switch to an alternative method for medicine supply, you will need to contact your hospital clinical team.

Storing my medicines

It is very important that you store your medicines correctly. All medicines should be stored out of sight and reach of young children. Although the delivery of homecare medicines is free of charge, you may have to pay for resupply of medicines that have been lost or stored incorrectly. Please check your home contents insurance cover to see if the drug and any associated costs of replacing medication are covered.

Medicines which need to be stored in a fridge

You should make sure the fridge is in good working order before the first delivery is made. You may prefer to buy a mini fridge so your medicines can be stored separately. If you do not have a working fridge please let your specialist pharmacist or nurse know, so the delivery of your medicines can be put on hold.

If a medicine has been left out of the fridge or your fridge has failed please read the patient information leaflet that comes with the medicine to see if it provides any information. If not, please call our medicines information helpline (in the contact details section below). Do not use the medicine until the hospital has confirmed it is safe to do so.

What if I am away or on holiday?

If you are going away or on holiday and a delivery is due whilst you are away, the medicines can be delivered to an alternative address in the UK. There are restrictions to this service and you will need to give **two weeks'** notice so that arrangements can be made.

The medicines cannot be delivered outside the UK. If you are travelling abroad and need extra medicines, please give the hospital clinical team and the homecare company **four weeks'** notice. This is so that extra medicines can be delivered to your UK address and a travel letter provided, if required.

It is important to declare your medical condition when buying travel insurance. If you don't, they might refuse to help if your condition worsens or you become unwell. You should also check to see if the cost of replacing medicines is covered. This is very important if you are travelling to countries with private healthcare systems such as the USA where costs are considerably higher.

Please consider what you would do if your medicines were lost or stored incorrectly. It's a good idea to take a copy of your most recent clinic letter from your doctor with you. Also please consider how you will store any medicines that need to be refrigerated. Some medicines can be stored out of the fridge for a short period of time. For medicines that cannot be stored out the fridge, the homecare company may be able to supply you with cool bags whilst travelling.

How do I feed back on this service?

We value your opinion and it is important that you tell a member of the clinical team or pharmacy if you experience any problems with the delivery of your medicines. You may be asked to complete questionnaires so that we can monitor the quality of the service that the homecare company is providing.

Contact us

If you have any queries about your delivery, please contact the homecare company using the contact details in their information pack.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact your clinical team on the numbers provided to you.

The homecare medicines service aims to make life easier for you. If things do go wrong then please **contact the homecare company first** to try and resolve the issue. If you have experienced any problems, please let your clinical team know at your next hospital appointment.

If you need medical assistance, please get in touch with your clinical team at the hospital, your GP, or NHS 111. If you are severely unwell and need immediate care, please seek help from your nearest emergency department or call 999.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111 **w:** www.111.nhs.uk

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing. **w:** www.nhs.uk

Leaflet number: 4272/VER2

Date published: November 2019

Review date: November 2022

© 2019 Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

A list of sources is available on request