

Obtaining Prescription Supplies

On discharge from hospital you will probably have been supplied with the products and supplementary products that you are currently using. You will be given the name and contact details of the supply company and your stoma care nurse will also give you a list of these products and their relevant order code so that you are able to obtain future prescriptions from your GP. Or they may give this to the GP/surgery directly.

Please bear in mind that in all cases, a prescription needs to be obtained before any supplies can be sent out.

To arrange repeat prescriptions there are a number of options.

1. The Supply Company handles everything

You can call them when you need to place an order, or very often they will call you on a monthly basis. They will then contact your surgery to get the prescription for your order and with that in hand will send out the order to your home, in unmarked packaging. They will include complementary wipes, disposal bags and they will cut flanges to size. They will also offer advice.

2. You get the prescription and the Chemist fulfils the order

If you want to use a chemist then you will need to arrange for the prescription from your GP. Repeat prescriptions can usually be handled online and can be sent to the chemist of your choice. Chemists then provide two levels of service. All chemists have to offer Essential Services and they will provide you with complementary wipes, disposal bags, a home delivery service and advice. If they are signed up to Advanced Services they will also cut the flanges for you.

3. You get the prescription and send it to the Supply Company to fulfill

You get the prescription from the GP and then send it in a Freepost envelope (supplied by the Supply Company) to the Supply Company of your choice and the order complete with complementary wipes, disposal bags and flanges cut to size will be delivered to your home.

4. You ask the GP to send the prescription to a Supply Company

You contact the GP to ask for the prescription which the surgery then sends to a Supply Company

which could be one they use or one that you specify. Again Supply Companies supply Freepost envelopes and the order complete with complementary wipes, disposal bags and flanges cut to size will be delivered to your home.

5. Your GP practice is a Dispensing Practice

If your GP practice is a Dispensing Practice they will probably prefer to fulfil the order through the dispensing arm of the practice rather than involve a DAC or other chemist. Again the GP will raise the prescription - you may be able to make a request for a repeat prescription online. The GP will then pass the prescription to the Dispensing arm of the practice. If they are signed up to offer Essential Services they will provide you with complementary wipes, disposal bags, a home delivery service and advice. If they are signed up to Advanced Services they will also cut the flanges for you.

It is worth knowing that the license conditions of the Supply Companies - called **Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DACs)** - state that they must supply all products listed in Part IX of the NHS Drug Tariff, which includes a broad range of ostomy and urology products. If they do not have the products in stock, medical product wholesalers exist to supply them with these products at short notice.

Supply Companies (DACs) are often integrated within stoma care product manufacturers/companies - such as Coloplast {*Charter*}, Hollister/Dansac {*Fittleworth*}, CliniMed {*SecuriCare*}, ConvaTec {*AmCare*} and Salts Healthcare {*Medilink*}. However there are several other independent DACs e.g. *Wilkinson Healthcare*. And all DACs will supply whatever brand of product is prescribed, no matter which manufacturer they are integrated with.

If the Supply Company (DAC) or Chemist (also called a Pharmacy Contractor) cannot dispense the item prescribed or cannot provide the required stoma appliance customisation, they must (with the patient's consent) refer the prescription form or repeatable prescription to another Supply Company or Chemist. If the patient does not consent to this, then the Supply Company or

Chemist must provide contact details for at least two other contractors who may be able to dispense the required item or service.

Supplementary Products are a very important part of managing one's colostomy and they are an intrinsic part of the order and hence prescription. They can be seen by some GPs as extras and possibly an area where cost savings can be made. Assuming that their inclusion in the order has been approved by the stoma care nurse and the quantity ordered is sensible and appropriate then any patient who is meeting resistance from a GP should refer them to the stoma care nurse for confirmation of the need for the supplementary products to be included in the order.

Emergencies/Urgent Supplies

In an emergency one can get supplies from a Supply Company or a Chemist without them being in possession of a prescription as long as your GP has agreed to give them a prescription for the supplies within 72 hours. If you can't get hold of your GP then the Supply Companies will very likely help you out and get you some supplies to tide you over, although without a prescription and unable to get a retrospective prescription they would have to bear the cost.

Prescription Charges

Colostomates living in the UK whose stoma is permanent are entitled to apply for a Medical Exemption (MedEx) certificate, which entitles them to obtain all prescriptions free.

Colostomates with a temporary stoma DO have to pay prescription charges for stoma appliances unless they are eligible not to for a number of reasons including, because they are over sixty, are being treated for cancer or are on benefits because of low income. For the full details, see the NHS prescriptions web page:

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Prescriptioncosts.aspx>

NOTE: One should allow up to three weeks from placing the order with a Supply Company until it is delivered to one's home.