

Shared care medicines

Information for patients
and carers



What are shared care medicines?

This is a service where the care and treatment of your condition is shared by your specialist and your GP.

It means the treatment started by your specialist can be taken over by your GP – which should be more convenient for you.

Shared care can only be done if you, your specialist and your GP agree to it. If they do not all agree, your specialist will continue to provide your treatment.



What happens when I start on a shared care medicine?

Your specialist will talk to you about:

- **the benefits and the risks of the medicine** – they will also provide you with any necessary written information
- **why the treatment needs to be monitored** – and how this will be arranged
- **the different roles in shared care** – the specialist team, the GP and you.

If you agree, your specialist will prescribe the medicine and make arrangements for the monitoring of your treatment. This may involve blood tests and other physical health checks, to make sure that the medicine is working well for you.

When you are stable or settled with your new treatment and your specialist thinks you are suitable for shared care they will ask your GP to take over prescribing and monitoring. If your GP agrees they will start to issue your prescription and will arrange any tests you need. The whole process may take up to four weeks.

Your specialist will continue to oversee your condition and treatment. They will review you at the clinic, based on your care management plan. If your specialist has any concerns or if there is a change in your condition, your specialist can review your condition at any time.

You will still receive the same high-quality care, but in a way that should be more convenient for you.

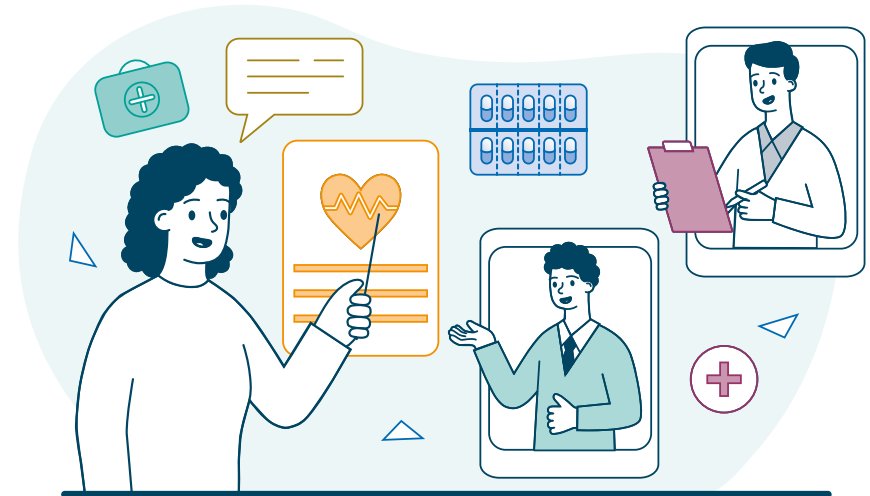
What part do I play?



There are several things you can do to make the shared care arrangement successful – **you are part of the team**. You should:

- take the medicine as prescribed, and never stop taking it unless your specialist or GP tells you to
- attend all of your test appointments and go to all follow-up appointments at the clinic or with your GP. It is important to check how well the medicine is working and whether you are developing any side effects. If you do not attend your appointments your treatment under the shared care arrangement may be stopped
- read any written information that you are given
- tell your specialist or GP if there is anything you do not understand, or if you have any concerns about your treatment

- take your hand-held monitoring booklet to all of your appointments, if you have been given one, and show it to any other health professional looking after you – such as a pharmacist or dentist
- tell your specialist, GP or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines
- always ask your pharmacist for advice before buying any medicines over the counter, including herbal remedies. It is therefore best to avoid buying medication for pain relief, coughs, colds and flu from a supermarket, garage or newsagent
- tell your specialist or GP if you have any new, persistent or worsening symptoms
- tell your specialist or GP about any changes to your circumstances that may affect how your condition is managed – for example if you become pregnant or are planning to become pregnant
- follow any other instructions given to you by your specialist or GP.



Frequently asked questions and concerns

How do I get supplies of my medicine?

Your specialist will start you on any medication. This means that at first you will get your medicine from the pharmacy department linked with your specialist team or from your community pharmacy.

Your specialist team will continue to prescribe and make sure you have enough of your medicine. After your GP takes over your treatment they will arrange your prescriptions. This means they can be dispensed by your local pharmacy. Make sure you allow enough time to order your prescriptions so that you don't run out.

How can I get more information about my medicine?

When you are first prescribed your medicine your specialist will give you all the information you need. A patient information leaflet will be provided with your medicine, and your specialist team may give you additional written information.

You may find some helpful information about your medicine at www.nhs.uk/medicines.

If you have any more questions or concerns, your community pharmacist may be able to help. You could also contact your GP, your hospital's medicines helpline (if they have one), or your specialist team.

How can I find out if my test results are normal?

When your specialist team is monitoring your condition and treatment, they will check your test results. If they have any concerns they will contact you to discuss what needs to be done.

Once your GP takes over someone from the GP practice will check that you have had the necessary recent checks. They will check that your test results are normal before issuing your monthly prescription.

My specialist team has increased my dose and asked for more frequent tests. Is this really necessary?

Your specialist team needs to be sure that changing your prescription has the effect they want it to. Most of the time there is no problem, but it is important to follow their advice so that they can spot any problems quickly.



I find it difficult to have my regular tests done. What should I do?

You should talk to your specialist team or GP about the difficulties you are having. If you miss your appointments for the necessary checks, your treatment under the shared care arrangement may be stopped. Without the oversight of your specialist or GP your condition may get worse.

I find it difficult to afford the prescription charges for my medicines. What should I do?

It is really important to take your medicines as they are prescribed. Speak to your community pharmacist about the help available with prescription costs.

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