

Free NHS prescriptions for people with cancer

Information and advice for patients

Cancer Services

You can get free NHS prescriptions if, at the time the prescription is dispensed to you, you are:

- Receiving treatment for cancer, **or**
 - Experiencing the effects of cancer, **or**
 - Experiencing the effects of current **or** previous cancer treatment
- and**
- You are entitled to treatment on the NHS

How do I apply?

How you apply will depend on your circumstances.

If you are a patient already in active treatment for your cancer diagnosis you should ask your GP for an FP92A application form, which they should complete for you. Once the form is completed and signed by your GP, it will then need to be sent to the address on the form. A prepaid envelope should be supplied with the form. Ask your doctor if you can send it yourself - this is likely to speed up the process.

If you are a patient about to start treatment for the first time following your diagnosis you will be given an FP92A application form by your Key Worker (Clinical Nurse Specialist) or Chemotherapy Nurse. If you have not been given a form at the start of your treatment, it is important that you ask for one. Once the form is completed and signed by the hospital doctor in charge of your care, it will then need to be sent to the address on the form. A prepaid envelope should be supplied with the form. Ask your doctor/nurse if you can send it yourself – this is likely to speed up the process.

What happens next?

Once your application is received an exemption certificate, known as a MedEx, will be issued to you within 7-10 days. It entitles you to all your NHS prescriptions free of charge, not just those relating to cancer. You will need to show your MedEx to the chemist or pharmacist whenever you get a prescription dispensed.

How long does the certificate last?

The MedEx certificate lasts for 5 years (or until your 60th birthday, whichever is soonest) and then needs to be renewed. You may receive a reminder that your certificate needs to be renewed. If you don't receive a reminder, it is your responsibility to ensure that it is renewed.

What if my condition changes?

The MedEx certificate will not have to be returned if your condition changes.

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What if I have paid for prescriptions recently?

Ask for an NHS receipt form (FP57) at the time you pay for the prescription and a refund claim form. Then, once you have received your MedEx certificate, take the FP57 receipt(s) and the refund claim form(s) to a chemist or pharmacy and they will provide a refund. You have to apply for a refund within three months of paying the prescription charge.

Prescription charges you have paid, and have FP57 receipts for, will be refunded back to the date your MedEx certificate takes effect (as shown on the certificate).

You can claim your refund from any chemist/pharmacist; it does not have to be the one where you originally paid for your prescription.

I have already paid for a pre-payment certificate (PPC) – can I get a refund?

If you have paid for a prescription prepayment certificate (PPC) and have become exempt from paying for prescriptions, you may be able to get some or all of the money back for your PPC.

An explanation of how to claim a refund of your PPC fee can be found on the NHS Business Services Authority website or in leaflet 'Help with health costs' (see 'Further information' section for details on how to access this information).

I am already entitled to free prescriptions/exempt for another medical condition, do I need another certificate?

If you already have an existing MedEx certificate at the time of your cancer diagnosis, you do not need to apply for another one. You do not need a MedEx certificate if you are already exempt from paying prescription charges (e.g. if you are over 60 years old).

Patients in follow-up

Patients who have been treated and are now clear of cancer, including those having routine follow-ups with planned discharge later, are entitled to free NHS prescriptions until their MedEx certificate expires.

Further information

For more information about help with health costs including details on who can get free prescriptions and exemption certificates:

NHS Business Services Authority

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Prescription pre-payment, medical and maternity exemption helpline:

0300 330 1343

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Department of Health leaflets

(available from Jobcentre Plus offices, NHS hospitals, GP surgeries, dentists or opticians)

- HC11: Help with Health Costs
- HC12: Charges and Optical Voucher Values

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcosts

Cancer Information and Support Services

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust,
Courtyard Centre
Sandwell Hospital
Lyndon
B71 4HJ
0121 507 3816

For more information about our hospitals and services please see:

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

www.swbh.nhs.uk

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- Department of Health: 'Extension of the list of medical conditions giving exemption from NHS prescription charges: guidance for doctors', January 2009
- NHS Business Services Authority, 'Help with health costs'

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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