

Top tips for people with sight loss about visiting your Pharmacy

Simple steps that you can take to ensure that your pharmacy team understands your personalised requirements.

These 'tips' have been compiled from information and suggestions gathered from Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Pharmacy department.

Your Pharmacy team welcomes your preferences so be specific and tell them your personalised requirements and they will do their best to meet these.

Don't assume that your pharmacy team will know you have sight loss. Tell them how they can help you, for examples, how you prefer information to be given to you.

Pharmacy environment:

- Share your suggestions with the Pharmacy team for a more suitable Pharmacy environment such as:
 - Bright colour contrasted lines on the floor to help you navigate to Pharmacy.
 - Colour contrasted guide rails to help you navigate to Pharmacy.
 - No chairs or other obstacles blocking the way.
 - Signs on doorways and at the Pharmacy counters (for example 'IN' and 'OUT' hatches) positioned at eye level and not too high up to enable you to view them up close.

- Ask for assistance if needed to be seated whilst you wait for your prescription.
- If you have a guide dog
 - You may need to remind the Pharmacy team not play with them without asking first as they are working.
 - Ask the Pharmacy team if your guide dog would like a drink of water.

Communication:

- Request to have your name or number called out verbally when your prescription is ready if you are not able to see a visual display.
- Ask the Pharmacy staff to allow you extra time to respond to their call when your prescription is ready.
- If you are accompanied by someone else, request that the Pharmacy staff speak to you directly unless you would prefer otherwise (for example, to speak to your carer).
- If you can't recognise a uniform or badge, ask who they are, their role and what tasks they will be performing.

Information:

- Request to have information presented in a way that you can best understand and in a format that you can access such as large print, Braille, audio CD or email. This includes labelling of medicines and leaflets in the waiting area.
- Request large font leaflets supplementary to the standard ones provided by the medicines manufacturer if you would prefer.
- If English is not your preferred language, request for other language options for verbal and written information. If you do not need this straight away discuss this with the Pharmacy team to agree when these could be made available.
- Request a personalised dosing schedule chart if you need one.
- If you cannot read the telephone number printed on the dispensing label, request a contact telephone number to obtain further advice if needed.
- If you would prefer to hold the medication container, when the Pharmacy team are providing you with information about your

medicines, ask the Pharmacy team for this (for example, eye drop bottles or inhalers).

- Ask the Pharmacy team to make a record of your personalised requirements on their patient record system.

Labelling:

- Ask the team for the font size print you need to read the medicine label.
- Offer to send me the information on the dispensing label by email if I cannot read large print or find email format more accessible.
- If you cannot use any of the above formats or prefer Braille, ask for the information in Braille. Be aware that this may not be available immediately.

Patient Information Leaflet (PIL):

Ask about access to the X-PIL service, which ensures that patient information leaflets (PILs) supplied with medicines are accessible to everyone, including those with sight problems.

Ask for help with using the X-PIL service by requesting an accessible written or recorded version of the:

- name of the medicine
- medicine's product code number

For more information visit www.medicines.org.uk/emc/xpil

In addition to ensuring key medicine label information is provided in an accessible format, offer me supplementary ways to identify my medicines, for example

- using different coloured highlighter pens to differentiate the different types of medicines.
- using two rubber bands tied around the medicine container for twice a day medicines, or a long rubber band with three knots around the medicine container for three times a day medicines.

- using paper clips, dispensing flags, sellotape 'flags', ribbons, string, different coloured/textured stickers
- Ask the team to tell you (verbally) about important information, such as expiry date or special storage conditions.
- Ask if you need support with identifying medicines with additional important information, such as expiry date or special storage conditions. Think about how you might identify the medicine that requires this, for example
 - record a voice note on your phone
 - receive an email from the pharmacy
 - as a supplementary reminder, mark the medication container with a marker pen or using a rubber band to identify fridge storage requirements.

Other considerations:

- Ask for a non-child resistant cap for medicines containers if you require this.
- If your tablets need to be halved, ask the Pharmacy staff to do this if required.
- If you being supplied a bottle of oral medicine to reconstitute at home, ask the Pharmacy staff if you can come back at a later date to collect a reconstituted bottle if required. Alternatively if you prefer to have the bottle clearly marked as requiring reconstitution, for example, using a marker pen or a dispensing flag, and you can ask the Pharmacy staff to do this.
- If required, ask for any medication compliance aids that might be useful to you, for example, easy grip bottle openers, aids for eye drops and inhalers.
- Ask for options of helpful medication compliance aids, if required, for example, easy grip bottle openers, aids for eye drops and inhalers.
- Discuss with the Pharmacy team the option of providing your medicines in a Monitored Dosage System with Braille if required.

Further Information

The NHS Accessible Information Standard covers NHS related pharmacy work. It ensures disabled people receive easily accessible information and support.

Comprehensive information on implementing the NHS Accessible Information Standard is at: www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/

Health professionals with any queries about the above information can email: england.patientsincontrol@nhs.net

NHS England also provides a telephone contact point for patients and members of the public with queries about the standard:
0300 311 22 33.

For general advice and support if you are providing a service to someone who is blind or partially sighted, or if you have sight loss yourself, or know someone who is, Contact Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for information and problem solving:

Telephone helpline: 0303 123 9999
email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
website: www.rnib.org.uk

The pharmacy team at Moorfields Eye Hospital have created an initiative to promote and encourage good eye drop compliance and provide support to patients, carers and staff regarding best techniques for administering eye drops. Find out more and watch the Know Your Drops video at: www.moorfields.nhs.uk/knowyourdrops

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