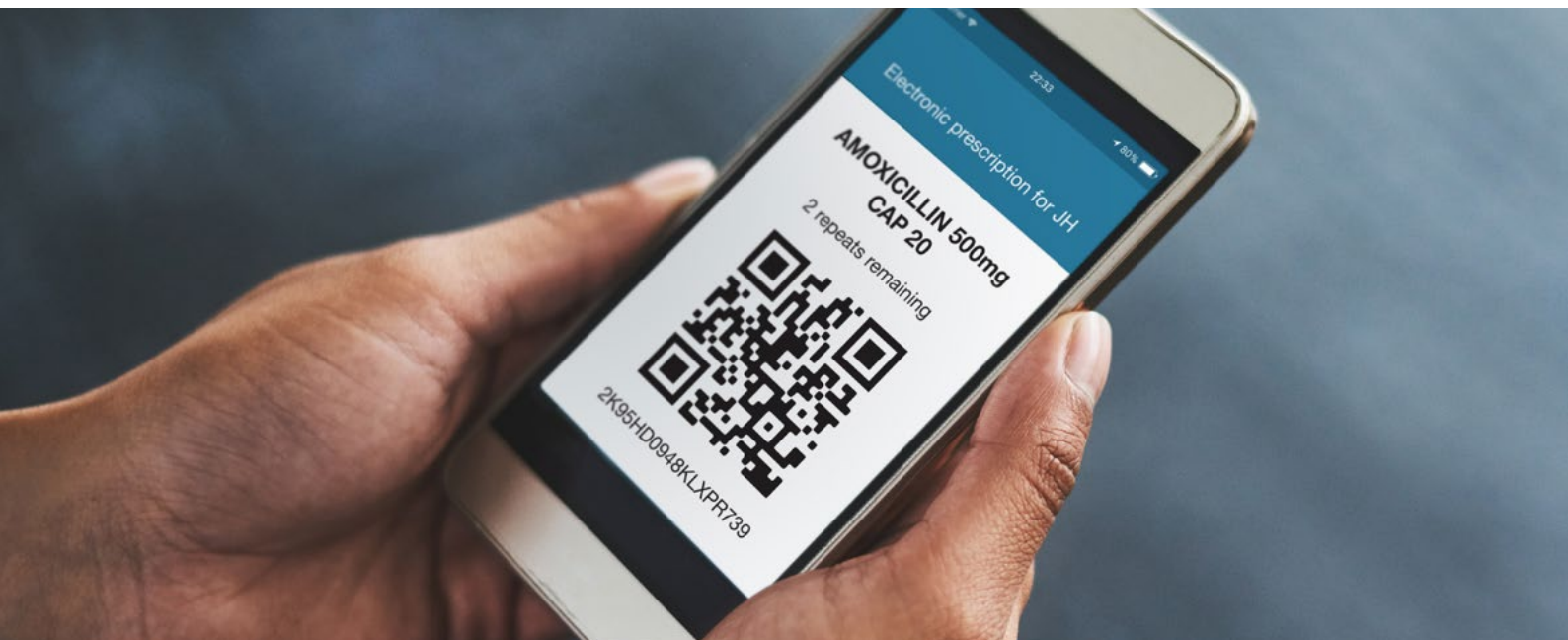


Electronic prescribing

Information for GPs



What is electronic prescribing?

Electronic prescriptions allow the prescribing and dispensing of medicines without the need for a paper prescription. Electronic prescribing provides enhanced convenience and choice for patients while improving medicines safety.

Electronic prescribing is an initiative introduced as part of the Australian Government's 2018–19 Health Portfolio Budget. Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) legislation has been changed to recognise an electronic prescription as an alternative to a paper prescription under the PBS. States and territories are also changing their relevant legislation to recognise an electronic prescription as a legal form to allow the supply of medicines.

Access to an electronic prescription is sent to a patient in the form of a 'token'. From late 2020, patients will be able to choose to manage their available prescriptions using an [Active Script List \(ASL\)](#).

How does electronic prescribing affect my workflow?

Your exact prescribing workflow will vary slightly depending on your clinical information system (CIS), as each system varies in the way it presents options to issue an electronic prescription.

The workflow will generally follow these steps:

1. Go through the usual prescribing process
2. Confirm the patient's preference for an electronic or paper prescription
3. If the patient wants an electronic prescription, follow the CIS prompts to choose the method of token delivery (SMS, email or a printout)

What is the token model?

A token is a **QR code** you send to the patient instead of giving them a paper prescription. The electronic prescription sits in an encrypted and secure electronic Prescription Delivery Service (eRx or Medisecure). When the patient visits a pharmacy, the QR code is scanned to access the prescription so the pharmacy can dispense the medicine.

Mobile apps will be available to help patients manage their tokens. These apps will allow patients to send tokens directly to their pharmacy.

How do I send a token to the patient?

You send the token to the patient either by SMS or email with a link to a unique QR code. You will also have the option of printing the token for the patient, if that is their preference. A printed token is not legally the same as a regular paper prescription and must be printed on plain paper (not prescription paper).

What does a token look like?

The token is a QR code and displays the following information when sent as an SMS or email:

- Patient initials
- Medicine name
- Date prescribed
- Number of repeats

What happens if the patient loses a token?

The token is not the legal prescription – it provides access to the legal electronic prescription held in the Prescription Delivery Service. Therefore, depending on your CIS, the token can be reissued, as the prescription can only ever be accessed once.

What if the token is sent to the wrong number or email address?

You must cancel the prescription, which will invalidate the token. You should create a new prescription, which will issue a new token.

Ensure patient details such as mobile phone number and email are up to date in your CIS prior to the consultation and confirm the token is received immediately upon prescribing, during the consultation.

Can a token be given to a third party (eg a caregiver)?

Yes. The patient may provide their carer's contact details prior to the consultation for the carer to receive the token on their behalf. The patient can also forward their token to their caregiver, family member or other agent.

What is an Active Script List?

An ASL is a list of a patient's available prescriptions, including repeats. The list is an opt-in feature, and patients will need to register to establish their ASL. When a prescription is generated, it appears in the patient's ASL, though the prescription is still stored in the encrypted and secure electronic Prescription Delivery Service. Using an ASL means patients don't need to manage their tokens.

A pharmacy can dispense medicines from the ASL after confirming the patient's identity.

The ASL feature will be available from late 2020.

Is consent required?

Patients must consent to a healthcare provider accessing their ASL. Once consent is given, all active prescriptions can be viewed by that healthcare provider. Patients can also choose to provide time-limited access to their ASL. If a prescriber has not been granted access, prescriptions they generate will still appear in the ASL for the patient or other healthcare providers with access to view.

What controls does a patient have over their ASL?

If a patient grants access to their ASL, the healthcare provider can see all current available prescriptions. Patients will be able to view and manage their ASL using an app.

How are prescriptions managed for patients on multiple medicines?

Patients will receive one token per medicine they are prescribed. Some patients may have difficulty managing multiple tokens, so ensure they are aware of this feature prior to prescribing using the token model. Consider whether a paper prescription is more appropriate for such patients. Mobile apps will make managing tokens easier for some patients.

The ASL will make it easier for patients with multiple medicines to manage their prescriptions. Patients will no longer need to present a token to their pharmacy if the pharmacy has access to their ASL.

How do I manage repeat prescriptions?

You do not need to do anything differently to electronically prescribe a medicine with a repeat. Your patient will receive one token from you, and when their medicine is dispensed, the pharmacy will issue the patient with a new token for the repeat. The original token will then be void.

Can I still use paper prescriptions?

Yes. Electronic prescriptions are not mandatory, and paper prescriptions will continue to be an option for you and your patients.

Once the form of a prescription (paper or electronic) is chosen, the prescription will stay in that form for its entirety (eg a paper prescription cannot have its repeats delivered electronically).

How do I prepare my CIS for electronic prescribing?

Refer to the RACGP's [electronic prescribing checklist](#).

Where can I find more information?

- RACGP – [Electronic prescribing](#)
- Australian Digital Health Agency – [Electronic prescribing information for prescribers](#)
- Australian Government Department of Health – [Electronic prescribing](#)

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