



PEG Article

Problems down at the Pharmacy

July 2023

At face value, the prescription and dispensing of drugs and other medicines might seem simple. The surgery gives you a prescription; on presentation of the prescription, the pharmacy provides the drugs. However, there are a number of issues that can upset this apparently simple system.

Your medicine might not be in stock

The British National Formulary is the UK pharmaceutical reference book that contains lots of information and advice on prescribing the many medicines available to NHS. It lists over 1500 drugs. The pharmacy cannot stock 1500 different drugs. It will stock the most widely used drugs in general practice; however more specialist drugs and those drugs infrequently prescribed will have to be especially ordered.

Problems in the drug supply chain occur in exactly the same way as inadequate supplies affect supermarkets. There may be particularly heavy demand for one type of medicine resulting in the pharmacy simply running out. Delivery to the pharmacy may have temporarily broken down because of, for example, lack of drivers. Drug manufacturers may have stopped making the drug or they themselves may have run out of basic chemicals. Either way alternative suppliers have to be found.

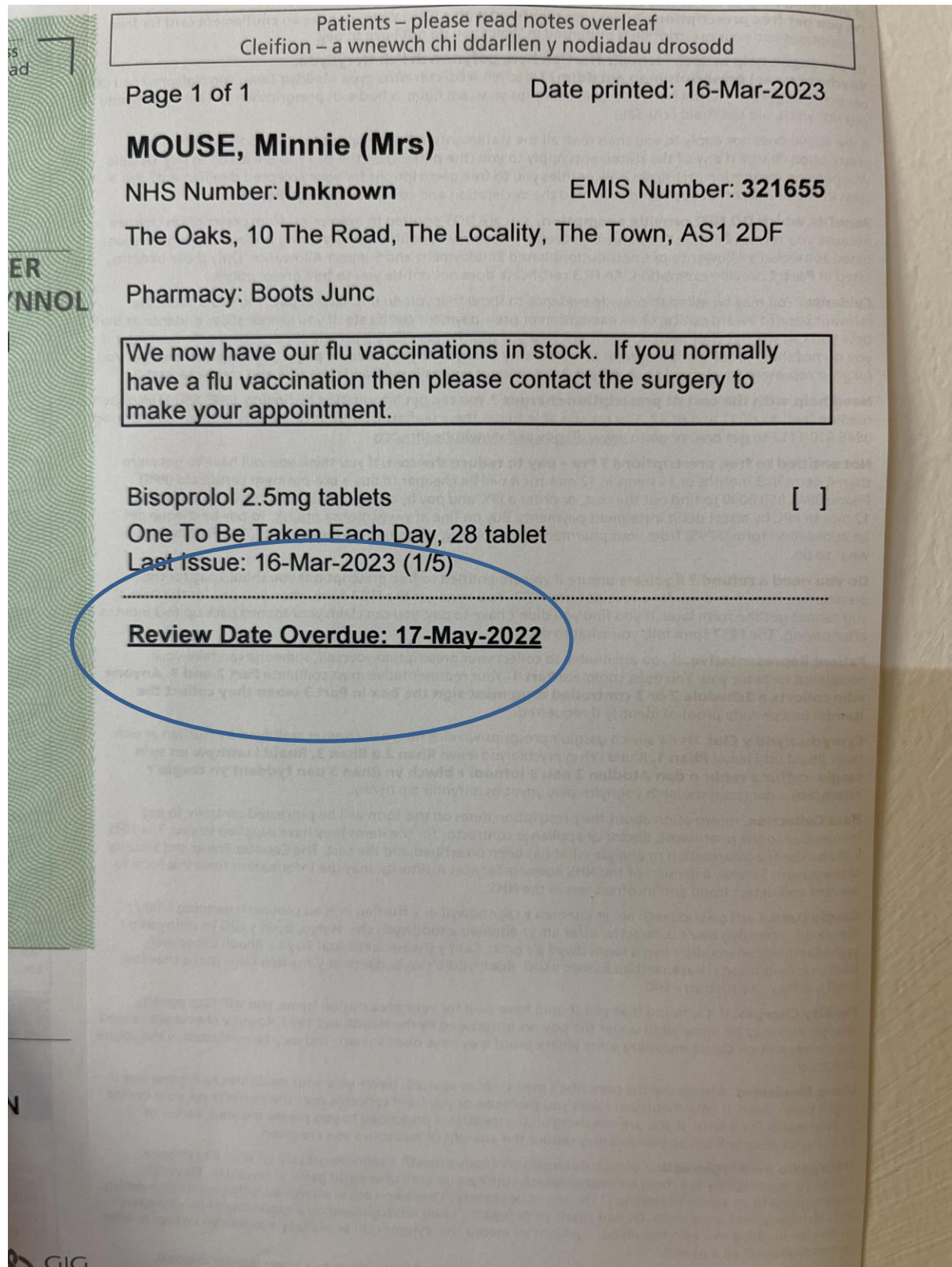
All of these mean that there may be a delay between presentation of your prescription and dispensing the medicine.

Your medicine needs review

Repeat prescriptions are an efficient way of ensuring a supply of drugs without having to bother the healthcare team. Many conditions require life-long drug treatment and repeat prescriptions help minimise the overall impact of disease on life style. However, drugs are fundamentally dangerous and long term drug use without supervision courts disaster. Although you may feel the drug suits you and is controlling your disease, your bodily mechanisms change overtime so that the drug may now not be working as well as it should, it may be building slowly up to toxic levels or starting to interfere with another drug you are taking. Repeat prescription review is the mechanism by which the surgery can check that your medicine is still working at its best. You may need a blood or other tests or only have to answer a few simple questions before a new prescription can be issued but these checks are absolutely essential.

Your prescription will tell you when you need to have your medicines reviewed. On Page 2 of the prescription issued by the surgery a review date will be specified. Please see an example of Page 2

below. All repeat prescriptions will detail a review date. In this case Mrs Mouse is overdue for review of her bisoprolol tablets. They may be working too well or not enough; without review nobody knows.



Patients - please read notes overleaf
Cleifion - a wnewch chi ddarllen y nodiadau drosodd

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Date printed: 16-Mar-2023

MOUSE, Minnie (Mrs)

NHS Number: **Unknown**

EMIS Number: **321655**

The Oaks, 10 The Road, The Locality, The Town, AS1 2DF

Pharmacy: Boots Junc

We now have our flu vaccinations in stock. If you normally have a flu vaccination then please contact the surgery to make your appointment.

Bisoprolol 2.5mg tablets

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One To Be Taken Each Day, 28 tablet

Last issue: 16-Mar-2023 (1/5)

Review Date Overdue: 17-May-2022

Making sure you always have enough medicine; what you need to do

When you first receive your prescription, make a note of your review date. Put the date in your calendar. You can order repeat prescriptions up to that date. Repeat prescriptions are best ordered on the website or the My Surgery app. If you are unable to order your prescription electronically, the care navigators will help you do it over the telephone. Before your review date, you should contact the surgery so that the most appropriate action can be taken. The pharmacy will not be able to dispense any medicines without an in date valid prescription; it is simply against the law.

If you have medicines on repeat prescription, it is best to take action 7 to 10 days before you run out. This will allow enough time for the surgery to issue another prescription and the pharmacy to make sure they have your medicines in stock ready to dispense. Most importantly it means that you will hopefully only need one visit to the pharmacy.

The system simply cannot work within a 48 hrs time frame. The surgery is responsible for making sure we are on the correct treatment; the pharmacy is responsible for issuing us with safe medicines. It is our responsibility to make sure we allow them enough time to do this.

Saxon

Saxon Ridley – Chair

On behalf of the 'Llys Meddyg and Gyffin Surgeries Patient Engagement Group'