

Dedicated to
clinical homecare

Patient Care Handbook



Introduction



Your clinical team has referred you to our service to help manage the delivery of your medicines.

We hope this handbook provides you with a little more information about us and the way our service operates – giving you peace of mind about the standard of care you will receive and what happens next.

We have also included information about safe storage of medicines at home, and tips and links to resources to help you to look after your health.



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Dedicated to patient care

Specialists in helping you manage your medical condition

- Alcura has been working with the NHS to support patients with their medical needs since 1994.
- We concentrate on providing a comprehensive range of often complex drug therapies to patients with a variety of conditions. We do not provide home-help staff.

Providing support in partnership with your clinic team

- Your NHS medical team and Alcura are committed to ensuring you have the best continuation of care possible.
- You now have an expanded healthcare support team, who are here to help you.



Alcura has years of experience working with patients like you.

- Our knowledgeable Patient Services Team is made up of therapy area specialists.
- We support patients to maintain control of their condition.
- We provide adaptable care options, so even if your needs change we can help you stay in control.

Sensitive to your needs

Flexible • Convenient • Discreet

We understand the importance of providing personalised services that adapt to meet your lifestyle needs, and reflect how you personally prefer to manage your condition.

- You select how, and when, you want to be contacted.
- Your personal information will stay safe. We offer a highly confidential and discreet service.
- You choose your delivery address – your medication doesn't have to be delivered just to your home.
- All medication is contained in plain packaging.

Giving you the confidence that you can get help when you need it.

- Your usual clinic team will still be seeing you on a regular basis – monitoring your progress, any associated conditions and managing your various treatment regimes.
- You will now also have additional practical help from the Alcura Patient Services Team.



97 per cent of patients rated Alcura Patient Services department as good to excellent.

(Alcura patient survey, 2012)

See pages 4 to 5 to find out more about Alcura's medicines delivery.

What happens next if you are having home delivery?

Once you have been seen at your clinic, your prescription will be checked by the hospital pharmacy team and then sent to Alcura.

Your Alcura therapy coordinator will contact you to explain what will happen next, and arrange delivery of your medicines. They will also answer any immediate questions you have about our service.



Discreet patient-focused delivery

Flexible to your medicines delivery needs

- All medicines are dispensed ready for delivery, under strict procedures.
- You can choose the best time and place for delivery of your medication – so it's convenient for you.
- Emergency supplies can be processed and delivered quickly.

You will always hear a friendly helpful voice on the phone or see a smiling face at your door – at Alcura, we like to show you that we are dedicated to your care.



87 per cent of patients rated our delivery service as good to excellent.

(Alcura patient survey, 2012)

Safety in mind

All our drivers adhere to strict delivery processes to ensure your medicines are correctly, and safely, delivered to you.

- Always ask the driver to show you their identification card.
- Don't accept parcels if they look like they have been damaged or tampered with.
- Put your medicines away as soon as possible.

If you have a problem with your delivery or you have received a 'calling' card from us, please call the Patient Services Team immediately and they will be able to quickly sort out the issue for you.

Here to support you, as much as you need

Even though you have chosen to manage your own treatment regime, Alcura and your NHS team will always be here to help and support you.

Your specialist clinical team are your primary point of contact and, maintain clinical responsibility for your care.

You may find it useful to note down (along with the date/time) anything you feel is important to share with your clinical team. For example, you felt unwell, felt a lot better, suffered a side effect, had a temperature, etc. All of these need to be discussed with your clinical team.

Giving you the flexibility to help yourself

It is important that you continue to take your medication at regular intervals, and follow the instructions given by your NHS team about the dosage of medication you should take, even if you are feeling better.

Why?

- Some medications need to be taken at specific intervals or in a specific sequence to be most effective.
- If your condition changes, your doctor needs to know this isn't due to you not taking your medication properly.
- Changing the timing of your medication, or stopping your medication all together, may make your condition worse or have a negative impact on your health.
- You may not feel the effects straight away – some medicines take a little time to start working fully.



Looking after your medicines at home

General advice about storing medicines and supplies

- Store medicine where there are minimal temperature changes and low moisture levels, e.g., in your bedroom rather than kitchen or bathroom.
- Keep medicines well out of reach and sight of young children. Put them in a high cupboard, a cupboard fitted with a child-resistant catch, or a lockable cabinet.
- Keep the caps closed on medicine bottles and put all medicines away immediately.
- Keep all medicines in their original containers so it is clear what is in them.
- Don't count out your tablets for the day and then leave them lying around.
- Never throw away unused medication in the bin.
- Do not flush medications down the toilet.
- Instead, take any no longer required/out of date medicines to your clinic to be disposed of safely.



Special storage advice

Refrigerated storage advice

Some medicines must be stored in a refrigerator because, at room temperature, they break down or “go off”. Medicines which need to be stored in the fridge will be clearly marked as needing refrigeration. They can include creams, ointments, eye drops and injections.

These medicines require storage in a refrigerator, with a temperature range of between 2°C and 8°C.

- Keep medicines away from water drips and possible food contamination.
- Store medicines away from the fridge’s internal light.
- Check the temperature of the fridge regularly.
- Clean and defrost your fridge regularly.
- In the event of a power cut or fridge breakdown, please contact either Alcura or the manufacturer of your medication for further information on what to do. (Manufacturer contact details can be found in the patient information leaflet with your medication).
- If your medication is delivered to another address other than your home (e.g., work) then keep unopened until able to move to a fridge on the same day.

If someone does take your medicine by accident, call NHS Direct, a doctor or the Patient Services Team immediately for advice.



Travelling with medicines

If you are planning to go away, it may be helpful to read our advice on pages 9 and 10.

Planning to go away?

Being on medication doesn't have to stop you travelling – it can go away with you.

Remember, it is important to keep taking your medication even while you are away.



As your medication may need to travel in your hand luggage, there are a few things you need to check before going away.

Before travelling

- You may wish to check with your airline or sea carrier about their carry-on policy.
- If your medication needs refrigeration – check to see if your hotel room has a fridge.
- Tell your repeat prescription provider so they can arrange extra medication to be delivered if necessary.
- Call your clinic – they can offer additional advice.
- Ask your clinic doctor for a copy of your prescription and a doctor's letter.
- Check if you might need additional prescriptions for other medication while you are away.

Getting ready to travel

Make yourself a travel document pack. You may have to show proof that you need to carry your medication at security at home and abroad.

- ✓ Copy of prescription
- ✓ Doctor's letter from your clinic

Check you have enough of all your medications to last through your time away and a few more days in case of a delay or other emergency.

Travelling with refrigerated medication

Medication needs to be kept cold while travelling, even on long car journeys.

1

Check with your airline or sea carrier about the refrigerated storage policy.

2

Wrap your medication in bubble wrap.

3

Pack in a small coolbag or box with 2-3 frozen iceblocks.

4

Transfer your medication to your hotel fridge as soon as possible.

If you are worried about travelling with your medication please give your clinic a call – they are there to help.

Places to find advice

There are numerous places that you can find information, not only about your condition, but also about staying healthy. GP surgeries, hospitals and chemists will all have leaflets, and there are plenty of health websites, Facebook pages and Twitter sites that will offer advice, tips and guides.

A few websites you may find useful include*:

www.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk/change4life

www.direct.gov.uk/en/HealthAndWellBeing

www.bbc.co.uk/health

www.patient.co.uk

www.smokefree.nhs.uk

www.webmd.boots.com

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness

** Please note that we do not take responsibility for the accuracy of information presented in any of these sites.*

Frequently asked questions

Area	Question	Answer
DELIVERIES	Do I need to have my medication delivered to my home address?	No, you can confirm with the Patient Services Team where you would prefer the delivery to be made. This could include your home or work or another address.
	What time will my delivery arrive?	A member of the Patient Services Team will contact you to arrange a convenient time. Depending on the courier company, there will be time slots available throughout the day – the majority of deliveries are made between 07:30am and 12:30pm.
	What happens if the courier tries to deliver and I'm not available?	The courier will leave a card to say that they have tried to deliver – they will make one further attempt on the same day. Alcura tracks your deliveries so if your medication is returned we will give you a call to re-arrange the delivery.
	Do I have to sign for the delivery?	Yes, this is important as we need a proof of delivery (POD).
	Can my partner / friend sign for the delivery?	Yes, provided that you have agreed to this. Please mention to the Patient Services Team that you would like a named person to sign for your delivery.
	Can my medication be left at the door or behind my gate?	No – due to the medical nature of your delivery we need to ensure safe delivery to you.
	What happens if I need to go into hospital?	Alcura will be notified and we will stop deliveries until you are home again.
STORAGE AND DISPOSAL	How do I store my medication?	This booklet contains information concerning this – please see page 8.
	How do I dispose of out of date or no longer required medicines?	Take the medicines in their original packaging to your clinic at your next appointment.

Area	Question	Answer
LOOKING AFTER YOUR HEALTH	I have developed a cold/ infection – can I still take my medication?	This will depend on your medication. If in doubt, contact your doctor/clinic and they can advise you. In some circumstances, it is important for your doctor/clinic to be aware that you may have developed a cold/infection. If you are uncertain, you should contact them.
	What happens if my prescription changes?	Alcura will be notified and update your prescription order.
	Who should I call if I'm feeling ill?	Contact your clinic team as they are managing your condition and will know your full history.
	Can I take alcohol with my medication?	This will depend upon your medication and condition. Check the patient leaflet which comes with your medication or discuss this matter with your doctor.
	What should I do if I run out of my medication?	Please contact the Patient Services Team who will be able to arrange for an additional prescription to be sent to us by your hospital/ clinic. We will then arrange an urgent delivery if necessary.
TRAVELLING AND MEDICATION	I am going on holiday abroad – how do I get more medication?	Your prescription provider will be able to provide you with a larger quantity. As it takes time to organise your additional prescription and delivery, please ensure you give us plenty of notice .
	Is there any guidance on travelling with my medication?	This booklet contains information concerning this please see pages 9–10.

If you have further questions, please contact the Patient Services Team on 01604 433 574 or 0800 0121 551 or email patient.services.sup@alcura-health.co.uk

Contacting Alcura

Please contact the Patient Services Team on the numbers shown below. They will aim to resolve any issues you might have.

During office opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 8:00am to 6:30pm
Saturday: 9:00am to 1:00pm

Call **01604 433 574**
or **0800 0121 551**

Outside office opening hours:

Call **01604 433 574**
or **0800 0121 551**

Alternatively, you can email us with questions at:
patient.services.sup@alcura-health.co.uk

In the event that you need immediate medical assistance, or you have queries about your prescription, (other than delivery queries), you should contact your clinic/emergency services of your hospital.

Clinic telephone no:

Pharmacy telephone no:

Alcura House, Caswell Road, Brackmills
Industrial Estate, Northampton, NN4 7PU



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