

COVID-19: dealing with patient-returned / unwanted medicines (England)

Appendix 1: checklist on pharmacy considerations for accepting unwanted medicines

Step	Process	Further information	Tick
1	Patient/representative has phoned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Appendix 2 checklist 	
	Patient/representative has walked into the pharmacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Appendix 3 checklist 	
2	Keep at least 2 metres away from patient/representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the case even if Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is worn 	
3	Follow general hand hygiene measures at all stages to minimise risk of infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear gloves if available Do not to touch your face Use forceps, if available, for denaturing Controlled Drugs (CDs) 	
4	Ask patient/representative what type of medicines are in the bag, for example, whether there are any CDs, sharps or cytotoxic/cytostatic medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If unsure of contents, follow step 5 For CDs, follow step 6 For sharps, follow step 7 For cytotoxic/cytostatic, follow step 8 	
5	Ask patient/representative to place their brought in bag into a suitable large tray/container and ask them to open the bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual check contents Try not touch/handle bag directly where possible 	
6	If there are any CDs in the bag, ask patient/representative to remove them and place them into a separate bag that you have provided to them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double bag CDs and place in CD cabinet for 5 days before denaturing them as per the usual pharmacy process If there is insufficient space in the CD cabinet, consider storing double-bagged returned CDs in alternative secure, lockable storage and manage the key in-line with how the CD cabinet key is usually handled in the pharmacy Record patient-returned CDs as per the usual pharmacy process 	
7	Sharps: ask patient/representative to remove them and place them into separate plastic bag that you have provided to them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless the sharps are part of a needle & syringe programme, and no NHS provision to accept it back for disposal, ask patient/representative to take them back home and arrange collection by the local council 	
8	Cytotoxic/cytostatic medicines: ask patient/representative to remove them and place them into separate plastic bag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Double bag the cytotoxic/cytostatic medicines and place directly into the separate hazardous waste bin 	
9	Non-CD/sharps/ cytotoxic/cytostatic medicines: ask patient/representative to place their bag into another bag (this is to double the bag with the unwanted medicines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not touch the patient/representative brought in bag Close/seal the second bag and place it directly into the waste medicines bin. 	
10	Clean and disinfect all affected surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the usual pharmacy process 	

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Appendix 2: checklist on patient/representative considerations for bringing in unwanted medicines – patient/representative telephones the pharmacy

Process	Further information	Tick
Patient/representative has phoned the pharmacy.		
Check suitability of patient/representative to visit pharmacy.	Do not visit if patient/representative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has COVID-19 symptoms • Self-isolating for 14 days because someone they live with has symptoms • Is part of the shielded patient category 	
Check whether the pharmacy has capacity to accept unwanted medicines.	Check current waste storage and collection facilities available at the pharmacy.	
If pharmacy cannot accept unwanted medicines, inform patient/ representative in a sensitive manner.	Suggest the following for safe home storage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not dispose in normal household rubbish or pour down drain • Store securely in a labelled and sealed box/bag • Keep out of reach of children and vulnerable individuals, and away from other medicines • Consider placing in garage/attic; do not place near heat sources or running water 	
If pharmacy can accept unwanted medicines, follow steps in Appendix 1.	Ask patient/representative to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with water and soap, or use an alcohol hand sanitizer • Wipe the outside of the packaging with damp cloth and a detergent • Place them into a plastic bag • Separate any CDs, sharps, cytotoxic/cytostatic medicines • Consider removing patient labels from the packaging 	

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Appendix 3: checklist on patient/representative considerations for bringing in unwanted medicines – patient/representative presents in the pharmacy

Process	Further information	Tick:
Patient/representative walks into the pharmacy.		
Check suitability of patient/representative to visit pharmacy.	They should go home if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have COVID-19 symptoms • Are self-isolating for 14 days because someone they live with has symptoms • Are in the shielded patient category 	
Check whether the pharmacy has capacity to accept unwanted medicines.	Refer to notes above, including, current waste storage and collection facilities.	
If pharmacy cannot accept unwanted medicines, inform patient/representative in a sensitive manner.	Suggest the following for safe home storage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not dispose in normal household rubbish or pour down drain • Store securely in a labelled and sealed box/bag • Keep out of reach of children and vulnerable individuals, and away from other medicines • Consider placing in garage/attic; do not place near heat sources or running water 	
If pharmacy can accept unwanted medicines, follow steps in Appendix 1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise patient/representative to wash hands for at least 20 seconds with water and soap, or use an alcohol hand sanitiser after handling the unwanted medicines. 	

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA), the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), Community Pharmacy Patient Safety Group (CP PSG) and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) have jointly produced this resource for community pharmacies. (May 2020).



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