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## Repeat prescriptions – take care<sup>1</sup>

Doctors in many GP practices are making increasing use of pre-printed scripts, to simplify the work involved in issuing large numbers of repeat prescriptions. Getting scripts prepared by practice staff or generated by computer can be an efficient way of meeting patients' needs, while reducing demands on doctors' time.

It is important, however, that any system for issuing repeat prescriptions takes full account of doctors' obligations to prescribe responsibly and safely.

Before signing a repeat prescription, a doctor must be satisfied that it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Arrangements for issuing repeat prescriptions should include suitable provision for monitoring each patient's condition; and for ensuring that patients who need a further examination or assessment do not receive repeat prescriptions without being seen by a doctor. This is particularly important in the case of drugs with potentially serious side effects, for example steroid preparations, where safe management must be a priority.

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1. As published in *GMC News Spring* 1999 issue.