



Do you know...

...how to confirm whether a product can be prescribed at NHS expense?

Sometimes it can be difficult to determine whether an item can be prescribed on an NHS prescription. This two-part guide (continuing next month) is designed to help pharmacies with this process.

PART 1 – Medical Devices (Appliances)

Medical devices can **only** be prescribed on NHS prescriptions if the product is listed in Part IX (Appliances section) of the Drug Tariff. Identifying whether a product is a medical device is not always straight forward, for example in recent years some items have transferred from being regulated as medicinal products to medical devices (e.g. Sterile Water for Irrigation), and some new products which have been introduced into the market which at first glance appear to be medicinal products or cosmetics have been registered by the manufacturer as medical devices.

A simple way to identify a medical device is to look for a **CE** mark which signifies a manufacturer is satisfied that their product conforms to the relevant medical device directives and that it is fit for its intended purpose. The CE mark can normally be found on the packaging of a device, on the instruction leaflet and on the device itself (where practical).

If you receive a prescription for a new product or an unusual item, you may wish to check the packaging to see whether the product bears a 'CE' mark (indicating that it is a device) or if you are in any doubt, contact the PSNC Information Team and we will be able to find this out for you:

01296 432823

Once it has been established that a product is a medical device, the next step is confirming whether the product is listed in the Drug Tariff as only medical devices listed in Part IX of the Tariff can be prescribed on an NHS prescription. Key points to consider are:

- Check that the prescribed appliance is an exact match for the listing in the Drug Tariff, for example is the type and pack size the same?
Particular care needs to be taken with dressings where only certain sizes of the dressing may be listed.

- If there is internet access in the pharmacy, the Drug Tariff can be viewed online at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/prescriptions. If the appliance has been ordered by code number or brand name, use the search functionality on the online Tariff to quickly locate the product.
- A list of common 'disallowed appliances' can be found on the PSNC Website (www.psn.org.uk/disallowedappliances). This can be a useful reference to double check that a device is not prescribable.
- Watch out for 'restricted availability appliances' (e.g. vacuum pumps and constrictor rings for erectile dysfunction). Details of restricted availability appliances can be found in Part IX of the Drug Tariff beside the listing for the relevant appliance. In a similar way to medicines on the selected list, these appliances may only be ordered on an NHS prescription for the patient groups and for the purpose listed in Part IX of the Tariff, and the prescriber must endorse the prescription 'SLS'. If the 'SLS' endorsement is missing, the prescription should not be dispensed and will not be passed for payment by NHS Prescription Services. Pharmacy staff cannot make the SLS endorsement.
- Care also needs to be taken with 'dual listed' products. When the name of an item listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff changes, prescribers have time to change their prescribing habits from using the old name to the new one. This period of grace, when both the old and new name for a product will be passed for payment by NHS Prescription Services usually lasts for 12 months. When the dual listing is removed, only prescriptions using the new name as it appears in the Tariff will be passed for payment.
- Finally, although medical devices can only be prescribed on an NHS prescription if the product is listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff, there is an exception that allows some, 'drugs packed with non-Drug Tariff appliances' to be prescribed where the appliance is used to administer the drug, for example metered aerosols packed with refills, nicotine inhalation cartridges packed with the device etc.

For support on whether a particular product is allowed on an NHS prescription, the PSNC Information Team will be happy to help (01296 432823 or e-mail info@psnc.org.uk).

Medical devices which could be mistaken for medicines

The items in the table below are classified as medical devices but are NOT in Part IX of the Drug Tariff so should **not be prescribed** on an FP10.

Item	Comments
Cerumol Olive Oil ear drops	Ear drops are often licensed medicines but this item has been registered as a device.
Clinell wipes (Chlorhexidine 2%)	These wipes have been registered as a device even though they contain Chlorhexidine and it would be easy to wrongly assume that they are a medicine.
Ethyl Chloride spray	This spray has been registered as a device even though it contains Ethyl Chloride and it would be easy to wrongly assume that it is a medicine.
Flexitol Heel Balm (non-Drug Tariff Pack Sizes – 56g and 112g)	This product is registered as a medical device. Two pack sizes of this product (75g and 200g) are listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff and are prescribable. The 56g and 112g pack sizes are not listed in Part IX so cannot be prescribed on an NHS prescription.
Neilmed SinuRinse	Nasal drops are often licensed medicines but this item has been registered as a device.
Optrex Actimist eye drops	Eye drops are often licensed medicines but this item has been registered as a device.