

HOW TO WRITE A PRESCRIPTION: GUIDELINES FOR DENTISTS V2.0

Basic legal requirements of a prescription

- Prescription should be written in ink or other unalterable electronic form.
- Hand written prescriptions should be signed by the prescriber.
- Clearly indicate the date of issue on the prescription.
- Clearly indicate full name, address, professional qualification and professional registration number of prescriber.
- Specify full name and address of patient, and if patient <12 years old, specify age or date of birth.
- Hand writing should be legible.
- Electronic prescriptions must be transmitted by the national electronic prescription transfer system (i.e. via a healthmail account).

Good practice points

- Include prescriber's contact phone number or email address on the prescription.
- Prescribe using the generic drug name.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- State name of drug, dose, frequency, route and duration of treatment.
- Include patient's weight in kilogram (kg) on the prescription if < 12 years of age.
- See section on [paediatric dosing tables](#) on www.antibioticprescribing.ie for antibiotic dosing tables and weight-based dosing for [paracetamol](#) and [ibuprofen](#) in children.
- In the case where a specific formulation is required e.g. a liquid preparation, this can be stated on the prescription.
- In the case of preparations to be taken 'as required', specify a minimum dose interval and the total quantity to be supplied.
- Avoid the unnecessary use of decimal points e.g. 3 grams should be written as 3 g and not 3.0 g, quantities of less than 1 gram should be written in milligrams e.g. 500 mg, not 0.5 g.
- When decimals are unavoidable, a zero should be written in front of the decimal point where there is no other figure e.g. 0.5mL, not .5mL. It is advisable to avoid trailing zeros e.g. 0.50 mL.
- Check allergy status of the patient.
- Check what other medicines the patient is taking, including non-prescription items, which may interact with the new medicine. See tables on drug interactions on www.antibioticprescribing.ie for a summary of current best guidance or refer to the Summary of Product Characteristics via www.HPRA.ie
- Check contraindications, potential side effects and caution in potential high-risk groups e.g. pregnancy/breastfeeding, elderly, children (refer to the Summary of Product Characteristics via www.HPRA.ie or in a recognised formulary, such as the BNF for further details).
- Advise patients to return to their dentist if their condition deteriorates, does not improve or if they develop any side-effects to the antimicrobial.
- Respond promptly to a patient's concern / adverse drug reaction (ADR). Any changes to medication should be clearly communicated to the patient and dispensing pharmacist.
- In the event of a serious side effect, or any ADR to a newly authorised product, report it to the [Health Products Regulatory Authority](#)
- Draw a diagonal line across the blank part of the form under the prescription to prevent fraudulent alterations or additions being made.
- Alterations are best avoided but if any are made they should be clear, unambiguous and endorsed with the prescriber's signature.
- Record prescription details in the patient's notes.