

“How To” Educate Consumers on the Value of E-Prescribing

E-prescribing can provide many benefits to the consumer.

How Does E-Prescribing work?

Your clinician enters your prescription directly into his/her computer, and then asks you which pharmacy you wish to use. The clinician has access to your medication history and insurance benefits which allows him/her to check for medication interactions, medication allergy and other features to assist the clinician at the time of prescribing to ensure that your medications are as safe as possible for you. Your prescription is sent securely and encrypted to the pharmacy's computer, not sent over the open Internet or as e-mail, and is protected by federal privacy laws. Prescriptions for certain medications (e.g., oxycodone) are still required to be written on paper and cannot be sent via a computer, although efforts are underway to change this.

What Are the Benefits of E-Prescriptions?

Fast & Convenient- Your prescription will automatically arrive at your pharmacy for you to pickup. The process ensures that your prescription will get to the pharmacist without the possibility of it being lost or misplaced.

- Since the pharmacy contacts the clinician, you save time by avoiding multiple calls and messages to your clinician to request a refill.
- Some pharmacies may call you to remind you to refill your prescription.

Improved Safety –

- There is no handwriting for the pharmacist to misinterpret.
- The clinician has access to your medication history which allows him/her to check for medication dose, interactions, medication allergy and other features to assist the clinician at the time of prescribing to ensure that your medications are as safe as possible for you.
- The clinician and pharmacist have access to tools that make it possible to confirm that you receive the ideal medication for your condition.
- E-prescribing improves safety by putting a list of your medications in a form that is more easily shared with other clinicians caring for you.

Economical – E-prescribing can display medications that your insurance company prefers and may save you money.

What to Ask

- **Communication & cooperation are key.**
 - **Ask your clinician if he/she e-prescribes.**
 - Also, visit www.surescripts.net or <http://www.learnabouteprescriptions.com> to find a list of clinicians and pharmacies that are participating in e-prescribing, or check with your health plan.
 - Ask your clinician for a printed medication list to keep in your wallet or purse for reference during other medical appointments.
 - **Ask your pharmacist** if they are setup to receive and process e-prescriptions.
 - **Rules may vary from state to state.**
 - To learn more, consider contacting your State Board of Pharmacy and Department of Health.

Resources

Visit HIMSS E-Prescribing wiki: <http://himsseprescribingwiki.pbworks.com/>. Tell us your story and give us feedback on your experiences with e-prescribing.

Web Resources on E-Prescribing

1. Institute for Safe Medication Practices: www.ismp.org/
2. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ): <http://healthit.ahrq.gov> (click on E-prescribing)
3. [A Consumer Guide to E-Prescribing: Understanding the Benefits, How It Works and What You Can Do](#). This downloadable booklet from eHealth Initiative includes e-prescribing information for the consumer.
4. SureScripts: www.learnabouteprescriptions.com; www.surescripts.com SureScripts and the national pharmacies launched a program in 2008 to educate consumers on e-prescribing. This Web site provides additional information on e-prescribing, including which clinicians and pharmacies in your area are participating in e-prescribing.

In the News

Note: E-Prescribing is a part of the economic stimulus package included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). These stimulus funds will help your clinicians adopt electronic health records and get reimbursed for its use.