

Who's Who Guide to Prescribing

A guide for patients and
carers



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Who could prescribe for me?

This leaflet gives information about who, other than a doctor, can prescribe medicines in the United Kingdom.


The healthcare professionals covered in this leaflet can take an extra qualification to register as a prescriber. This means they can write prescriptions either after assessing you themselves (known as independent prescribing) or by working with a doctor (known as supplementary prescribing).

This guide will tell you more about these professionals, what they do and where you may see them.

Please note that there are other ways that medicines can be given to you that are not covered in this leaflet. For example, healthcare workers (such as pharmacists, paramedics and midwives) have special permissions which allow them to provide medicines in certain situations. Dentists may also prescribe for dental care.

This leaflet was made with the help of service users, health professionals and team members from the TRaDiP project: Innovation in the allied health professions: evaluation of supplementary prescribing by dietitians and independent prescribing by therapeutic radiographers, ID: PR-R19-0617-21001.

The information was correct on: 24/01/2024. For further information, please talk to your healthcare professional.



Dietitians

Dietitians are experts in diet and nutrition. They work closely with colleagues to treat complex conditions such as diabetes, conditions affecting the food pipe, stomach and/or intestines, and kidney disease. Dietitian prescribers can prescribe a range of medicines related to diet and nutrition including insulin, specialist feeds, and conditions such as high cholesterol. Dietitian prescribers provide services in the hospital, community, and general practice.

Midwives

Midwives work with women before, during and after delivery, including during the first few weeks after giving birth. This includes supporting women's future reproductive health and well-being, and in promoting very early child development and the early days of parenthood.

Midwives may be based within hospital units, community clinics and GP practices.

Registered midwives can provide medicines for pain and constipation. Midwives with a prescribing qualification may also prescribe other medicines, such as antibiotics.



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Nurses

Registered nurses provide care in many settings including the NHS, private and voluntary sectors. There are four areas of nursing practice: adult, children's, mental health and learning disabilities. Once qualified to prescribe, some nurses prescribe in their specialist area of practice, such as for patients with



breathing problems, diabetes, or pain. Others such as nurse practitioners, who work in general practice or walk-in-centres, usually prescribe for a range of minor complaints, and/or long-term conditions.

Optometrists

Optometrists can prescribe for conditions affecting the eye, and the surrounding area. They can prescribe privately and, where suitable arrangements have been made, write an NHS prescription. They work in a number of places including eye services in the hospital and the community, as well as primary care.

Paramedics

Paramedics mainly treat patients with new or urgent health problems such as infection, pain, and injuries. Paramedics most commonly prescribe antibiotics, painkillers, and medicines for asthma and for skin problems. Paramedics mostly see patients when working in ambulance services, GP practices, emergency and urgent care settings.



Image credit: StorySet

Pharmacists

Pharmacists are experts in designing and making medicines, as well as their supply. They provide advice and information on medicines to patients and other healthcare professionals.



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Pharmacists work in community pharmacy, general practice, and hospitals. They can prescribe for minor illnesses, long-term conditions, as well as specialist treatments.

Physiotherapists

Physiotherapists work across all fields of healthcare, focussing on recovery. They can prescribe medicines to help with a range of health conditions and pain related to bone, joints or soft tissues, the brain or nervous system, the heart, or lungs.

Physiotherapists work in many healthcare settings including hospitals, community clinics and some GP practices.

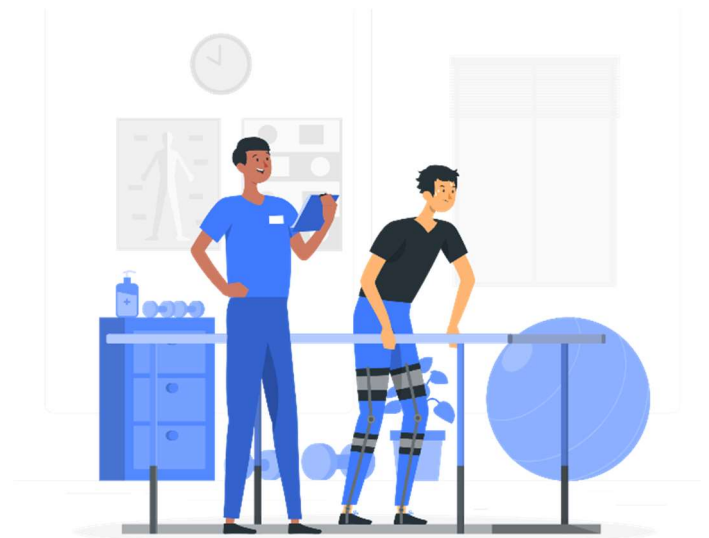


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Podiatrists

A podiatrist is a specialist in the management of foot and ankle conditions. This can include muscle, bone and joint problems. Prescribing may be for pain or inflammation in the foot/leg, as well as infection affecting the foot, such as ingrowing toenails or fungal infections of the skin or nails. Podiatrists may also prescribe for other conditions such as diabetes, which can cause foot ulcers. Podiatrists work in community clinics and hospital settings. Those who train as podiatric surgeons specialise in surgery of the foot and ankle in hospitals.

Radiographers

Diagnostic radiographers care for people of all ages with many illnesses and injuries. They are trained to use imaging technologies such as X-rays, MRI, ultrasound and PET scans. People often require medication to help show up blood vessels and organs, or to manage pain and infection risk as part of the test. Diagnostic radiographers can work with medical doctors to prescribe these medicines. Diagnostic radiographers usually work in hospitals or diagnostic treatment centres.

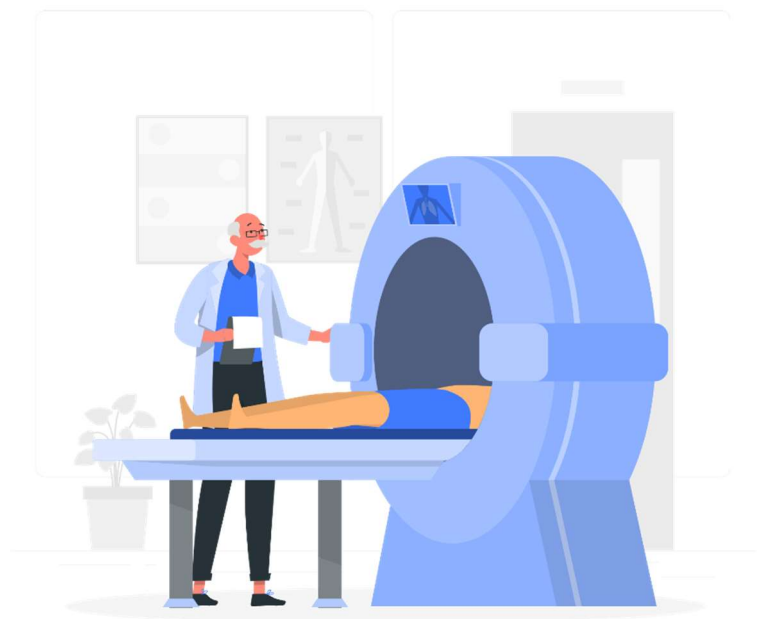


Image credit: StorySet

Therapeutic radiographers plan and deliver radiotherapy to treat cancer, either to cure the disease or provide relief from symptoms such as pain. They prescribe medicines to help relieve side effects caused by the high energy radiation used. This can include painkillers, steroids, antibiotics, laxatives, and anti-sickness medicines. They usually work in larger teaching hospitals.