



Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions

Electronic Transfer of Prescriptions (ETP) is an important foundation for community pharmacy in the movement towards a connected healthcare system.

ETP is the safe and secure transfer of prescription information between a prescriber (doctor, specialist, dentist, optometrist, nurse practitioner etc.) and a community pharmacy using an electronic system known as a Prescription Exchange Service (PES). There are currently two PES systems operating in Australia – eRx Script Exchange and MediSecure. Each PES has been approved by the Commonwealth and is required to meet specified standards relating to security and privacy. A pharmacy or medical practice may be connected to one or both PES systems.

To realise the benefits of eHealth, community pharmacy will get actively involved in developing skills in electronic medication management, the first step of which is getting 'ETP active' by making in your pharmacy ETP-enabled.

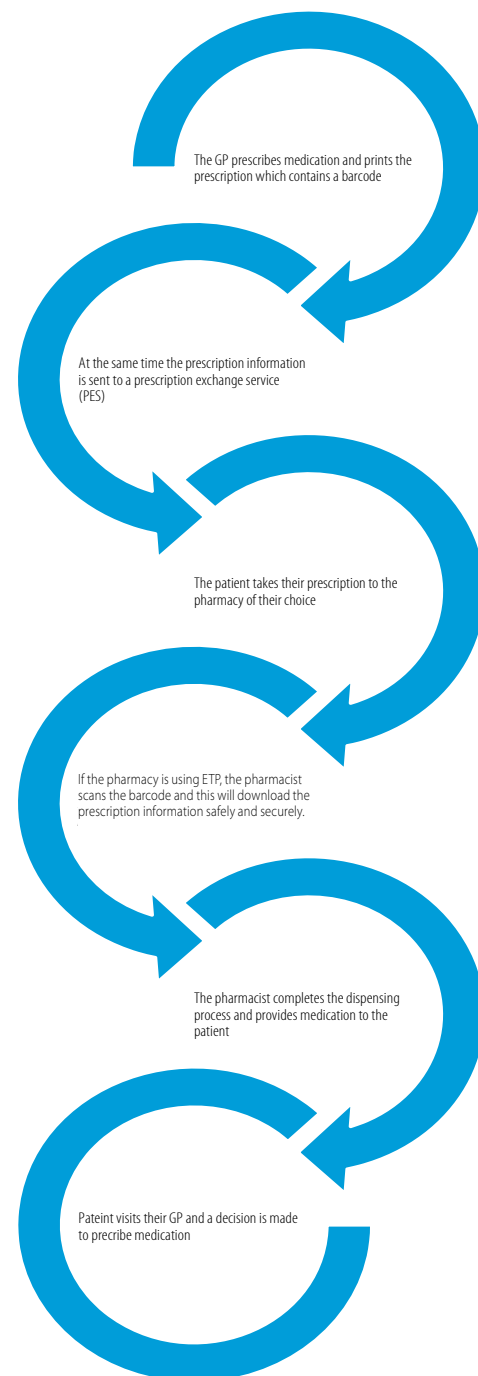
How ETP works

When a prescriber prints a prescription, an electronic copy of the prescription is secured via encryption¹ and automatically uploaded to the pharmacy's preferred prescription exchange service. The electronic copy of the prescription is held securely in the PES until such time as it is downloaded by the dispensing pharmacy by scanning the barcode. An electronic prescription is easily identified by the single barcode on the hardcopy prescription.

When the patient takes the paper prescription to an ETP-enabled pharmacy of their choice, the pharmacist will scan the barcode, allowing the dispense system to automatically 'pull down' and decrypt the prescription information from the PES.

This information is then used to automatically populate the pharmacy dispensing system including patient, concession, Medicare and the statutory prescription information.

If the pharmacy does not use ETP, the prescription is dispensed as per the standard dispensing process. That is, the prescription information is manually transcribed into the pharmacy's dispensing system and the medicine dispensed.



¹ Encryption is the process of encoding messages (or information) in such a way that unauthorised parties cannot read it, but that authorised parties can.



Benefits of ETP

Ensuring that medicines information can be accurately and securely shared underpins a range of medications management and healthcare benefits for both patients and healthcare professionals.

From a patients perspective there is benefit from improved health outcomes as the risk of transcription errors is greatly reduced. This contributes to reducing the likelihood of preventable adverse drug events.

From a pharmacy perspective, there are significant time and workflow efficiencies as the time spent re-keying prescription information can be directed to activities such as patient counseling and improving health outcomes-centred on medication compliance. Other significant benefits that will flow are better messaging between pharmacists and doctors, streamlining the management of owing prescriptions, changes in item or instructions and last repeat notifications.

It is also important to note that incorporating ETP into practice has a very low impact and is not a negative change to workflow for prescribers or pharmacists.

PES Interoperability

An important part of making ETP work is to ensure that all electronic prescriptions barcodes can be read regardless of the dispense system or ETP provider a pharmacy uses. This means that all electronic prescription barcodes from ETP-enabled pharmacies (irrespective of which PES system holds the electronic prescription or associated electronic repeat authorisation) will allow the scanning of the prescription details and thus be interoperable.

In 2013, the two PES system operators (eRx and MediSecure) completed an interoperability project to ensure that all pharmacies will be able to scan any barcode and download the prescription information safely and securely to the pharmacy's dispensing system.

Becoming 'ETP Active'

To enable ETP a pharmacy is required to register with a PES. There are currently two providers operating in Australia – eRx Script Exchange and MediSecure.

To register with a PES, a pharmacy is required to have a compatible pharmacy dispensing system. The pharmacy dispensing system may dictate which PES a pharmacy registers with, as not all systems are integrated with a PES.

ETP active

Once a pharmacy is registered with a PES and is eligible for the Pharmacy Practice Incentives (PPI) Community Services Support priority area, a pharmacy should ensure all pharmacists and pharmacy assistants scan the barcodes on all available electronic prescriptions.

To be truly 'ETP Active' a pharmacy should aim to embed the scanning of barcodes on all available electronic prescriptions, whether they are originals or repeats into its workflow.

ETP is just the first step

ETP is the foundation for other medication management initiatives such as National Prescription and Dispense Repository. This repository contains a combined list of prescribed and dispensed medications regardless of how many different doctors and pharmacies the patient regularly visits. It may contain prescription data from the community, hospital and aged care settings.

Community pharmacy is ideally placed to take full advantage of the medication management benefits of ETP and we encourage all pharmacies to ensure they are connected to this future by being 'ETP Active' today.

Prescription Exchange Service (PES) Providers:

eRx Script Exchange

Phone: 1300 700 921

Email: support@erx.com.au

Web: www.erx.com.au



MediSecure

Phone: 1800 472 747

Email: helpdesk@medisecure.com.au

Web: www.medisecure.com.au



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is the national peak body representing community pharmacy. It serves the interests of its members and supports community pharmacy in its role delivering quality health outcomes to all Australians.

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