



## Kirstye's Top Ten Tips for Christmas Cheer in your Dispensary

As Christmas fast approaches and with the well reported significant pressures faced across the NHS it is important to get information out to your patients as soon as possible regarding ordering cut off dates and opening hours.

We are closed for 4 days this year so a little forward planning is required to ensure patients get medication they need in time for Christmas and to avoid excessive post-Christmas holiday urgent requests!

Patients should be gently reminded to only order what is required, as "just in case" medication requests increase at this time of year significantly.

- Get an Opening Hours sign up in the dispensary, (snowman picture optional!). Put it in the windows and social media such as Facebook. Get this updated so your patients have as much notice as possible.
- Clearly display the cut off dates for ordering repeat prescriptions including cut off times for your non dispensing patients as soon as possible.
- Make sure you have relevant information displayed about what to do over the Christmas period should patients need assistance, such as calling 111 for urgent medical assistance and dental emergency signposting or 119 for Covid related information or testing.
- Which local pharmacies are open? There will be one open within your local area even on Christmas day. Visit <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/pharmacies/out-of-hours-medicines/> to find this information for your patients.
- If your patients are on a Managed repeat service with your Dispensary then don't be tempted to give them early collection dates of the week before Christmas. Keep the date as it is, even if this a day you are shut, and just make it clear to them to

collect early only if they need to.

- In preparation for Christmas, I suggest being no more than 5 days ahead on managed repeats, this can avoid the shelves becoming unnecessarily too full as patients may not pick up until after the Christmas holidays.
- Try to avoid dispensing managed repeats, where possible, on 23rd or 24th December so these days can be kept for last minute, urgent queries and acute dispensing.
- Speak to your care/nursing homes in plenty of time to ensure they have orders in in time should they fall over the Christmas period. Also that they have the local pharmacy information for over the Christmas holiday period.
- With delivery and MDS (Dosette) patients it is often a good idea to deliver two weeks supply or deliver a little early. This is to free up time for the urgent deliveries on the week leading up to Christmas.
- If you have a text service and a lot of uncollected medicines on your shelves then get texting those patients the week before Christmas to get them collected before the rush and to free up some space!
- Make sure all patients collecting in December have a DRUM form attached. If they have not had a DRUM done yet. It is a good chance to pick up some of the patients missed so far. Stress the importance of getting these back to you after Christmas.
- During the last week before the holidays make sure you have done a thorough check of your stock levels and made supplier orders in plenty of time to ensure you have adequate fast moving stock and acute items such as antibiotics and pain relief. With the current driver shortage and medicine supply issues it's better to foresee these delays and keep your stock from running too low without excessive purchasing!

*Merry Christmas! Kirstye, Dispex Tutor*