



FOR SPECIALIST PRACTICES

# Electronic Prescriptions

The following guide provides steps on how to implement electronic prescriptions in your practice, including:

- Familiarising yourself with relevant legislation,
- Preparing for connection to a Prescription Delivery Service (PDS),
- Connecting to a PDS,
- Training staff,
- Communicating that you are ready, and
- Remaining up to date.

These steps will support you in enabling the provision of electronic prescriptions to your patients.



### ELECTRONIC PRESCRIPTIONS IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

... STEP

1

FAMILIARISE YOURSELF  
WITH THE LEGISLATION

... STEP

2

PREPARE FOR  
CONNECTION TO A PDS

... STEP

3

CONNECT TO A PDS



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

... STEP

6

REMAIN  
UP TO DATE

... STEP

5

COMMUNICATE THAT  
YOU ARE READY

... STEP

4

TRAIN STAFF

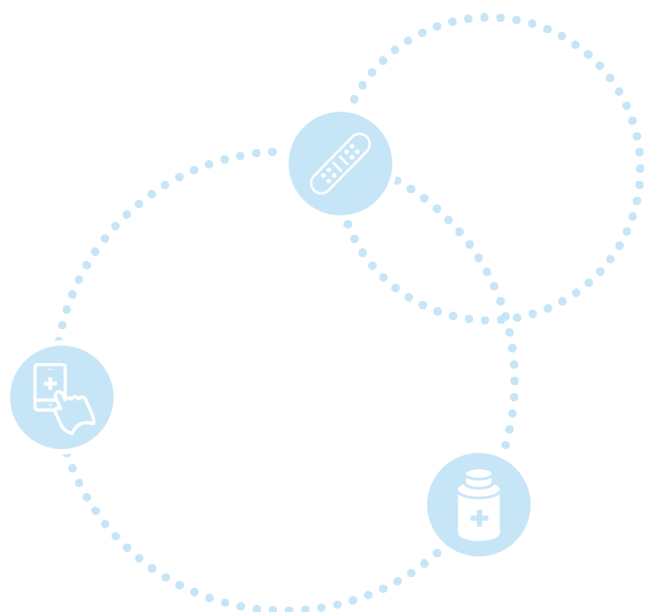


Australian Government

Australian Digital Health Agency

# Implementation checklist

IMPLEMENTATION STEP	STATUS
Familiarise yourself with the legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare for connection to a PDS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connect to a PDS	<input type="checkbox"/>
Train staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate that you are ready	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remain up to date	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Step 1: Familiarise yourself with the legislation

Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation recognise electronic prescriptions as a legal form to allow medicine supply. It is important to understand the legislation behind electronic prescriptions and the frameworks that have been created to ensure safe and appropriate use of the technology.

## NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Legislation now recognises and allows the use of electronic prescriptions. This includes the following:

- [National Health \(Pharmaceutical Benefits\) Regulations 2017](#) – Now allows the use of an electronic prescription as a legal alternative to a paper prescription.
- [National Health \(Claims and under co-payment data\) Rules 2017](#) – Now details the requirements for claiming for the supply of a pharmaceutical benefit from an electronic prescription.
- [Form of the Electronic Prescription 2019](#) – Defines the information fields required when a Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme prescriber writes an electronic prescription.
- [Electronic Prescriptions Information Technology Requirements Instrument 2019](#) – Details system requirements for participating in electronic prescribing.

## STATE AND TERRITORY LEGISLATION

Changes have been made at the state or territory-level to recognise electronic prescriptions. For more information, see the legislation to the following jurisdictions:

- [Queensland](#),
- [New South Wales](#),
- [Australian Capital Territory](#),
- [Victoria](#),
- [Tasmania](#),
- [South Australia](#),
- [Northern Territory](#), and
- [Western Australia](#).

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia provides a useful [summary of electronic prescribing legislation](#) specific to each state.

## Step 2: Prepare for connection to a PDS

### ENSURE YOUR CLINICAL SOFTWARE IS COMPATIBLE

Confirm with your software provider if they are progressing electronic prescription capability. All software involved must have a conformance ID registered on the Australian Digital Health Agency's [Electronic Prescriptions Register of Conformance](#).<sup>1</sup>

### ENSURE YOUR ORGANISATION HAS A HEALTHCARE IDENTIFIER

A prescriber will need a Healthcare Provider Identifier -Individual (HPI-I) and the organisation will need a Healthcare Provider Identifier - Organisation (HPI-O). Ensure your practice has an HPI-O recorded in the clinical information system (CIS) and is connected to the Healthcare Identifiers (HI) Service. If your practice does not have a HPI-O, view the Australian Digital Health Agency's webpage on [registering your organisation](#) for guidelines and further information.

**Note:** If your practice is connected to My Health Record, then you have already completed this step.

### REQUEST/LINK NASH AND MEDICARE PKI CERTIFICATE THROUGH HPOS

The National Authentication Service for Health (NASH) is a digital certificate used by healthcare providers to securely access and share health information through their CIS. To connect to electronic prescriptions, the practice will need a NASH and/or Medicare Public Key Infrastructure certificate requested/linked through Health Professional Online Services (HPOS). In some cases, you may only need a Medicare PKI certificate (check with your software provider to find out if both are required). See the Australian Government Services Australia's webpage for guidance on requesting a [NASH and/or linking a Medicare PKI certificate](#).

### ENSURE YOU ARE ADHERING TO ELECTRONIC PRESCRIPTION POLICIES

Practices with electronic prescription capability should take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and integrity of electronic prescription data and personal information associated with the electronic prescription and should have an:

- [Electronic Prescriptions Security and Access Policy](#),
- [Electronic Prescriptions Privacy Policy](#), and
- [Electronic Prescriptions Data Usage Policy](#).

Guidance within each document above outlines what security, privacy and data usage considerations need to be addressed to provide electronic prescriptions.

## Step 3: Connect to a PDS

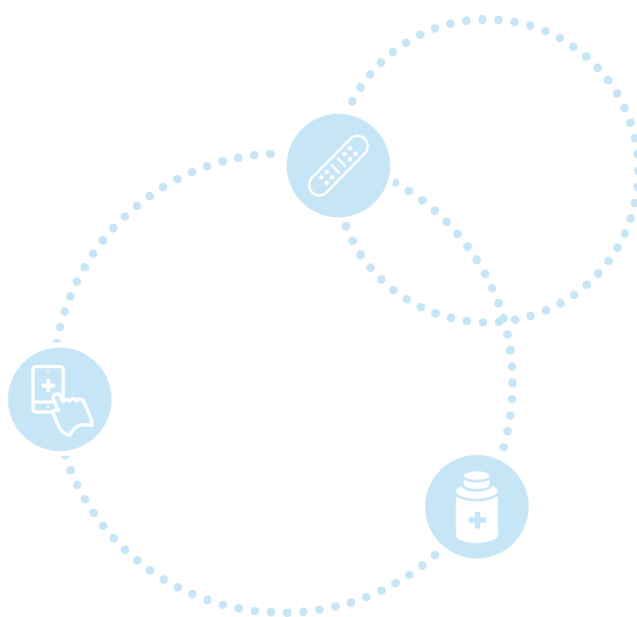
### CHOOSE A PDS

Ensure your practice is connected to a PDS and that all prescribers have the PDS functionality enabled within their individual user accounts. A PDS securely moves and stores prescription information electronically. Two PDS providers are available in Australia – eRx and MediSecure. Details on how to register is available on their websites – [eRx Script Exchange](#) and [MediSecure](#).

Both PDS providers integrate seamlessly into your clinical software and provide guidance on how to issue an electronic prescription using your software.

### INSTALL UPGRADED SOFTWARE

Once you have your HPI-O and NASH and/or Medicare PKI certificate and are connected to a PDS, contact your software provider to update your software. As part of this process, you may need to provide the HPI-I for each of your team members that will be using electronic prescriptions and your organisation's HPI-O.



## Step 4: Train staff

### TRAINING

Training for electronic prescriptions should be provided. The current Electronic Prescriptions Module will assist staff in understanding electronic prescriptions, including its purpose, benefits, and application, and should be distributed to staff interacting with the electronic prescribing process. Healthcare organisations should consider training on other relevant topics as well, such as how to use the software accurately and responsibly (e.g. through your CIS provider), and the legal obligations for the organisation and individuals. Prescribers should confirm with local pharmacies that they have electronic prescription dispensing capability before issuing an electronic prescription to patients.

The Australian Digital Health Agency has also developed a three-module eLearning course that staff can complete, called [Electronic Prescriptions for Prescribers](#), that covers an introduction to electronic prescriptions.

**Note:** In addition to training, staff should be kept informed about electronic prescriptions, including information relevant to their role and how they may respond to patients' questions about electronic prescriptions (e.g. the FAQs provided at the bottom of the Australian Digital Health Agency's [Electronic Prescriptions webpage](#)).



## Step 5: Communicate that you are ready

Once your organisation is ready to offer electronic prescriptions, communicate this change to your local pharmacies and patients. Consider using the Australian Digital Health Agency's [communication toolkit](#). The resources provided in the toolkit can support you to communicate to pharmacies and patients that your practice is either in preparation or has existing electronic prescribing capability through:

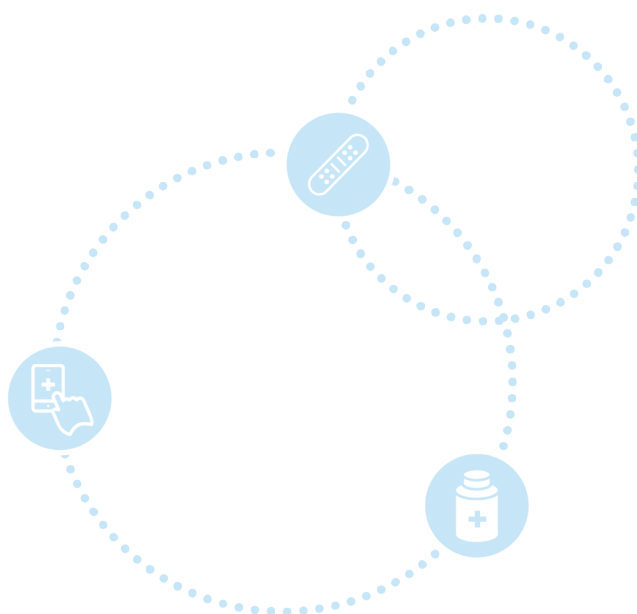
- Email,
- Social media,
- Website,
- Point of sale, and
- Printed materials.

For instance, consider posting the provided information on your website, sending flyers or an email with your contact details, and placing posters and stickers on your front window.

**Note:** The communication toolkit explains the resources available and their applications, while the actual resources can be located on the following Australian Digital Health Agency [webpage](#).

### ISSUE YOUR FIRST ELECTRONIC PRESCRIPTION

Once you have successfully implemented the electronic prescription capability, it's time to issue your first electronic prescription. See the Electronic Prescriptions User Guide to get started.



## Step 6: Remain up to date

Some parts of the country are likely to see a rapid uptake of electronic prescriptions, so it is encouraged that all healthcare organisations stay informed and seek to understand any changes that might be required to be ready. Local peak body representatives and Primary Health Care Networks (PHNs) are available to offer support regarding changes that might be recommended for your practice s to prescribe electronic prescriptions.

To remain up to date, ensure that you:

- Understand relevant State and Territory legislation, regulations and guidance,
- Keep in touch with your local pharmacies to check whether they are enabled to dispense electronic prescriptions for your patients,
- Subscribe to your software provider newsletters and correspondence,
- Keep your clinical software up to date,
- Stay up to date with communication from clinical peak organisations, and
- Regularly review the [Australian Digital Health Agency's Electronic Prescriptions - For Prescribers](#) webpage.





# Additional resources

- [Electronic Prescribing for Prescribers Fact Sheet](#) | Australian Digital Health Agency
- [Electronic Prescriptions for Prescribers](#) | Australian Digital Health Agency
- [Electronic Prescribing](#) | Australian Government Department of Health
- [Electronic Prescribing](#) | Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- [Electronic Prescribing](#) | RACGP<sup>2</sup>
- [Help Centre](#) | Australian Digital Health Agency

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<sup>1</sup> The Agency's conformance process requires software developers to declare the electronic prescription software as conformant with the national technical framework and to register a Conformance ID. Conformant software allows the secure transfer and exchange of prescription information through a conformant 'PDS' and 'dispensing system' – the 'electronic prescribing system'. Many software providers are upgrading their existing CIS in accordance with the electronic prescription technical framework published by the Australian Digital Health Agency.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, '[Electronic prescribing implementation checklist: For general practices](#)', 2019, East Melbourne, Vic, accessed 10 September 2020.