

This leaflet contains some useful information about gaining exemption from prescription charges if you are undergoing treatment for cancer.

From 1 April 2009 people undergoing treatment for cancer can apply for a medical exemption certificate. This will mean that they do not have to pay NHS prescription charges.

If you are aged 60 or over you will not need to do this, since you are already exempt from prescription charges.

How do I get hold of a medical exemption certificate?

You will need to complete a green form entitled 'Application for prescription charge exemption' (FP92A). People aged less than 60 will receive this form by post before their first appointment at St Luke's Cancer Centre. The form is also available from the St Luke's Pharmacy or your GP surgery. You should complete Part 1 and Part 2 of the form and then a doctor should complete Part 3. The doctor may be your GP or a doctor you see in the St Luke's outpatient clinic.

When completed send the form to:

NHS Business Services Authority
Help With Health Costs
Medical Exemption
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 1ZL

Try to get the form completed and sent off as soon as possible. This will help to ensure you have it ready should you need any prescriptions.

What should I do with the medical exemption certificate once it arrives?

You should carry the certificate with you and show it to the pharmacy when you collect prescriptions. You may be asked to sign the back of the prescription to confirm you do have a valid medical exemption certificate.

What happens if my medical exemption certificate has not arrived by the time I need a prescription?

You will need to pay for your prescriptions and ask the pharmacy for an NHS Refund and Receipt claim form (FP57), which includes information on how to claim a refund at a later date.

Once I have a medical exemption certificate will I still have to pay for prescriptions for non-cancer conditions (e.g. high blood pressure or asthma)?

No, medical exemption certificates cover all prescriptions, not just for cancer or the effects of cancer treatment. The only medicines not covered would be those prescribed on private prescriptions.

How long is a medical exemption certificate valid for?

Certificates are valid for 5 years and can be used until the end date shown. A reminder will be issued automatically.

The certificate may then be renewed, provided the reason for exemption still applies.

Valid certificates do not have to be returned if your condition changes.

What if I find I am not eligible for a medical exemption certificate?

First confirm with your GP or pharmacist that you are not exempt from prescription charges for any other reason.

If you find you do have to pay prescription charges, you could save money by buying a Prescription Prepayment Certificate. The NHS leaflet FP95 'Pre-Pay Prescription Charges' includes instructions for getting hold of a prepayment certificate. This leaflet is available from the St Luke's Pharmacy, your local pharmacy or GP surgery. It is also available on-line, using the following web address:

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1127.aspx

Where can I find further information about prescription charges?

Ask at the St Luke's Pharmacy, your local pharmacy or GP surgery. The NHS leaflet HC11 'Help with Health Costs' may also be useful. This leaflet is available from some pharmacists and GP surgeries. It is also available on-line using the following web address:

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/HealthCosts/792.aspx