

Your pharmacy and COVID-19



During the COVID-19 pandemic, community pharmacies are open but may be operating differently.

Your community pharmacy does more than just dispense medicines. Community pharmacies offer a range of services to keep you and your family well, including flu vaccinations.

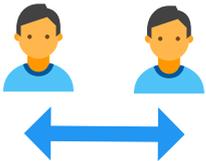
Collecting your medicines



Pharmacies may limit the number of people entering the pharmacy at any one time. It's a good idea to call your pharmacy ahead of time to ask when they are open and when it's a good time to collect your medicines. Calling them first may mean that you don't have to wait for a long time.

If you have problems picking up your medicine from your pharmacy, speak to your pharmacist. Someone else (family/whānau member, friend or carer) may be able to visit the pharmacy to collect your medicines for you, or ask your pharmacy if they can deliver to your home.

Physical distancing



To ensure physical distancing, the pharmacy may have barriers or screens between you and the pharmacist. This may make it hard for you to hear information. If you have problems hearing or understanding information, let your pharmacist know. They can give you written information as well. Most pharmacies have a private area. Even if you don't see one, tell your pharmacist if you want to discuss your health issues in private.

Changes to medicine supply



Medicine supply has changed. In most cases your pharmacist will give you a 1 month supply of your medicine at a time, unless it is an oral contraceptive, which will be 3 months supply. If getting only 1 month at a time is difficult for you because you have mobility issues, live rurally, have low immunity or are elderly, the pharmacist may be able to give you a 3 month supply.

There are enough medicines in the country for everyone but it is important not to stockpile your medicines or get a larger supply than usual because this could lead to shortages for other people. If there are stock issues, your pharmacist will work with you and your doctor to find solutions.

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Keep taking your medicines regularly

It's really important that you keep taking your medicines regularly, as prescribed by your doctor. Don't stop or reduce your dose of your regular medicines. There are no clinical studies showing harm from taking any medicines during the COVID-19.



If you need a new prescription

If your medicines are running low and you need a new prescription, contact your doctor. If you have problems getting in touch with your doctor, speak to your pharmacist and they may be able to help you get a prescription from your doctor. Most doctors can now send your prescriptions directly to the pharmacy through fax or electronically so you don't have to go there and pick it up yourself.



Paying the prescription charges

If you can't pay for your medicines, you can get financial support from the Ministry of Social Development. Find out more about financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic at www.covid19.govt.nz.



List of pharmacy services

Apart from dispensing medicines, community pharmacies offer a range of services to keep you and your family well. Some pharmacies provide more services than others. The following are a few examples. If you are unsure whether your pharmacy provides these services, give them a call.

- Medicines packaging such as blister packs
- Flu vaccination
- Emergency contraceptive pill
- Oral contraceptive pill
- Smoking cessation
- Treatment for urinary tract infection
- Blood sugar check
- Blood pressure check
- Anticoagulation check if you are taking warfarin
- Medical equipment hire
- Disposal of medicines safely

Your pharmacist can also show you how to use devices such as asthma inhalers, diabetes blood test kits, blood pressure machines and air humidifiers.

If you become unwell, call your doctor or Healthline 0800 611 116