

Additional FAQs about accessing PBS subsidised medicines

My usual Community Pharmacy is flooded or inaccessible; how do I get my prescription medication?

If you can't get to a community pharmacy, your GP's prescriptions can be filled by Queensland Health hospital pharmacies.

[The following FAQs would also apply to people seeking PBS prescription medicines from QH hospital pharmacies]

I need supplies of my prescription medicines but don't have any way of paying for them right now.

In all but the most urgent cases, try and organise emergency payment from Centrelink first so that you are able to pay the legally required co-payment for the medicines.

Current co-payments for PBS medicines are:

- For general patients, up to \$34.20
- For concession card holders or DVA card holders: \$5.60.
- If you choose a more expensive brand of medicine, or if your doctor prescribes one, you may need to pay more—the extra amount you pay won't count towards your PBS Safety Net

In an urgent situation, you may be able to negotiate a credit arrangement with your community pharmacy or go to public hospital. If a community pharmacy agrees to dispense medicines in an emergency for cases of genuine need, they will record the details and are likely to ask you to pay any co-payments later.

If you go to a public hospital, the hospital pharmacy will be able to dispense PBS medicines. You will be given an invoice for any outstanding payments for you to settle at a later date.

Can I still get my PBS medicines if I don't have my Medicare card, DVA or Centrelink concessional cards?

If you can get to a community pharmacy but you don't have your cards, the pharmacy can get these details for you by calling PBS. This means that:

- Your eligibility to receive PBS medicines can be confirmed
- These medicines will still be recorded for safety net purposes
- If you have a concession card, the patient co-payment will be at the concessional level

You can request a replacement Medicare Card at

<http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/update/index.jsp>

You will still be expected to pay the PBS or DVA copayments:

- For general patients, up to \$34.20
- For concession card holders or DVA card holders: \$5.60.

- If you choose a more expensive brand of medicine, or if your doctor prescribes one, you may need to pay more—the extra amount you pay won't count towards your PBS Safety Net

I don't have my PBS prescriptions but need PBS medicines.

If you can get to your usual community pharmacy, in this emergency, they will be able to dispense PBS medicines for you using one of a number of different arrangements, depending on the situation. For instance, they may provide you with 3 days worth of medicines or contact your doctor for a verbal prescription.

You will still be expected to pay the PBS or DVA copayments:

- For general patients, up to \$34.20
- For concession card holders or DVA card holders: \$5.60.
- If you choose a more expensive brand of medicine, or if your doctor prescribes one, you may need to pay more—the extra amount you pay won't count towards your PBS Safety Net

I had my last prescription filled less than 20 days ago but I have lost my medicines and need more

Your community pharmacy can dispense more medicines in this emergency situation.

I need some of a special medication that the doctor has to get special authority for but I don't have the prescription or it is too soon to get a new supply.

The community pharmacist can call a special phone number to get authority to dispense these types of prescription medicines or to dispense the medicine again, even if it is "too soon".

I need medicines urgently but can't get to a community pharmacy or hospital.

Contact the SES to arrange evacuation or alternative supply

Reference: Advice for approved pharmacists supplying PBS medicines to patients in areas affected by the Queensland Flood Emergency from DoHA 13/1/11

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