



PHARMACY EMERGENCY SUPPLY FACT SHEET

The following information may be of assistance to pharmacists supporting patients who require emergency access to their prescription medicines in the absence of a prescription, including patients affected by natural disasters.

What if the patient does not have a current prescription and *can't* contact their doctor?

Emergency Supply

- If a patient does not have a current prescription and is unable to see a prescriber, state and territory legislation allows a pharmacist to provide a limited amount of medicine without a prescription as emergency supply.
- The pharmacist must assess the situation based on the best available information and determine the patient has an urgent need for that medicine for continuation of their treatment.
- The conditions of supply may vary between jurisdictions but is generally limited to a three (3) day supply of medication.
- Some jurisdictions allow for the emergency supply of a standard manufacturers' pack when the pack cannot be broken e.g. eye drops or inhalers and may make special arrangements during a natural disaster.
- Some prescription medicines cannot be dispensed as emergency supply.
- If clarification is required, contact your [State or Territory Medicines and Poisons unit](#)
- Emergency Supply in this manner cannot be claimed through the PBS.

Continued Dispensing for oral contraceptives or cholesterol lowering medicines

For patients requiring urgent supply of oral contraceptives or cholesterol lowering medicines (statins), pharmacists may dispense a single PBS quantity under Continued Dispensing arrangements without a prescription. Supply of medicines under these circumstances must be consistent with [Continued Dispensing requirements](#).

What if the patient does not have a current prescription but *can* contact their doctor?

Owing Prescription

In an urgent case where the patient cannot present a prescription but their doctor can be reached, the doctor may provide direction (via telephone, email or fax) to the pharmacist to supply a prescription medicine. Where this occurs, the doctor must immediately forward the prescription to the pharmacy within stipulated timeframes to cover the supply and to allow the pharmacy to complete any applicable PBS claims.

National Secretariat



What if the patient does not have their Medicare, DVA or Centrelink card?

- If patients are unable to present their Medicare or Centrelink card the pharmacist can call the PBS Inquiry line 132 290 (press option 1), for assistance with a patient's Medicare or concessional details.
- If patients are unable to present their DVA card the pharmacist can call the Veterans' Affairs Pharmaceutical Advisory Centre on 1800 552 580.
- Pharmacists can use a [Medicare special number](#) if the circumstances fit.

For more information:

Contact your local Guild branch or call 13 GUILD (13 484 53).

This document provides general guidance and is not a substitute for specific professional advice. Pharmacists must ensure they are familiar with the applicable State or Territory and Commonwealth laws relating to the emergency supply of prescription medicines in the absence of a prescription. In each circumstance appropriate records will be required.

This information is correct as at 8 January 2020.