

Let's Talk About: What Pharmacists and we can do about Prescription Medications



Pharmacy Services at a Glance:

- Pharmacists can provide **emergency prescription refills of up to 30 days**, providing temporary relief until one can secure a medical appointment. They can also **renew a prescription if the medication has been consistently used with no changes in the last 6 months**. While this does not apply for every medication (i.e., asthma inhalers), many commonly prescribed medications are considered.
- Medication reviews are **free** for those who have taken **5 or more medications in the last 6 months**.
- There is an extensive list of services that BC pharmacists are qualified to offer.
- Prescriptions are still valid if issued in the last **24 months** and the prescriber is still practising in B.C.
- If you're experiencing **side effects** or having trouble taking your medication, ask your pharmacist for an assessment. When possible, talk to your Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner first about problems with your medication.
- Pharmacists can adjust the **dose** or the **timing** for how you take or use your medication or
- Change the **formulation** of your medication (for example, from a tablet to a capsule or a liquid)

- **Substitute** your medication for a different but similar medication

Additional Information about Medication Management

If you have been taking the same medication for a stable medical condition for six months or longer, pharmacists may be able to renew your prescription for longer than with an emergency supply. It should be done by a pharmacy that received your original prescription, requires some assessment and information collection by the pharmacist, and does not apply to medications for cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma, seizures or psychiatric conditions.

In many cases, pharmacists can adapt a prescription to a similar -but different- medication if you are having a problem tolerating one of your medications, if your medication becomes unavailable due to supply issues, or if you need a change from tablet to liquid dosage form. Pharmacists want to help you succeed with your medication regimen. If you are experiencing difficulty taking your medication as prescribed, please give your pharmacy a call.

Information about Vaccination with Pharmacy in BC



There are many vaccines available that do not require a prescription from a physician:

The HPV (Human Papilloma Virus), shingles, tetanus, pneumonia and hepatitis B vaccines are just some examples. You do not have to put off scheduling your vaccination appointment until you can get a doctor's appointment!

Some Information to keep in Mind Moving forward ...

- You may have different prescriptions, prescribed at different times by different providers or if you have taken at least five prescription medications in the last six months, you are eligible for a medication review (funded by Pharmacare at no cost to you) at your pharmacy.
- A medication review improves patients' understanding of their medications, checks for contraindications, and the review can also be

shared with other health care professionals including a family doctor, specialist, or walk-in clinic.

- Renew your prescription with your provider if **'zero' refills** noted. Create reminders for yourself. Please never leave your prescription to the last minute with two pills left. Allow **at least 4 weeks** to make a routine appointment for prescriptions. Because ...it is not **'just a prescription'**. Medications do require regular review appointment time for safety every 3-6 months or as discussed with your prescriber to monitor and follow up on your conditions for your optimal preventative health care (i.e., regular blood tests as for kidney or liver function, checking efficacy or dosage, sharing new information, BP review, therapeutic levels)
- If you already have an appointment, please make sure to have your medication with you so you can check what is needed.
- Living on an Island with limited health care resources and **no** Pharmacy can affect timely prescriptions. As well, weather conditions can affect delivery.
- As part of emergency preparedness, it is important to always have **an extra 30 days** of all your prescriptions on hand.

Awareness and planning about all your prescriptions are crucial to staying healthy and safe.



Your medication - can be your lifeline.

With your health in mind and heart,

Juliana Losier

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