



60-day prescriptions in residential aged care overview and FAQs

Sunday 1 September 2024

You may be wondering how the new 60-day prescriptions will impact Residential Aged Care Homes (RACH), their supplying pharmacies, and residents. Below is an overview of how 60-day prescriptions work in RACH, including services that are using an electronic or paper National Residential Medication Chart (NRMC).

Overview of 60-day prescriptions in RACHs

Since 1 September 2023, many patients living with a stable ongoing health condition have been able to receive twice the medication on a single prescription. Prescribers have the option to prescribe available medicines for either 30 or 60-day prescriptions (according to their professional clinical judgement) for any consumer, including those living in residential aged care homes.

The use of 60-day prescriptions does not affect the way medicines are prescribed in residential aged care. New Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Item Codes have been created for medicines that are on the [medicine list](#) for increased dispensing quantities. When prescribing one of these medicines the prescriber will need to enter the PBS Item Code that corresponds to the supply quantity (ie. 60-day or 30-day) on the prescription or medication chart.

Where the medicine is prescribed and dispensed from a medication chart for a resident in aged care, the pharmacist can re-dispense a further 60-day supply, once the previous 60-day supply of medicine has been administered to the resident. This can occur as many times as necessary to ensure continuous administration for either the duration of the chart or in accordance with the resident's prescription and repeats.

Frequently asked questions

What medicines are in scope for 60-day prescriptions?

60-day prescriptions have been introduced gradually in 3 stages over 12 months. The first stage was introduced on 1 September 2023. The second stage started from 1 March 2024 and the third stage is now available from 1 September 2024.

Stage one commenced on 1 September 2023 and stage 2 commenced on 1 March 2024, enabling 60-day prescriptions for almost 200 medicines. Many people can now get twice the medication on a single prescription. From September 2024 this will apply to almost 300 medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). A full list of the medicines which are included for 60-day prescriptions is available on the [PBS website](#).

Does 60-day prescribing automatically apply to in-scope medicines?

No, 60-day prescribing does not automatically apply to medicines in scope. Prescribers must assess their patient to determine whether a 60-day supply of an in-scope medicine is appropriate. If a prescriber

believes it is appropriate for their patient to receive 60-day supply of an eligible medicine, the prescriber must indicate on a new prescription that 60-day supply should occur.

How will 60-day prescriptions be managed through National Residential Medication Charts (paper and electronic)?

The paper-based National Residential Medication Chart (NRMC) and transitional electronic NRMC are valid for 4 months and allow for ongoing supply of most medicines for the duration of the chart. By allowing ongoing supply, these charts remove the requirement for repeat prescriptions. Pharmacists can dispense a single maximum PBS quantity as many times as necessary to ensure ongoing supply and administration of that medicine to the resident, for either the duration of the chart or a shorter duration as specified by the prescriber.

Pharmacists will be able to dispense a 60-day supply in the same way all other medicines are dispensed for residents. Once the majority of the 60-day supply of medicine has been provided to the resident, the pharmacist can re-dispense a further 60-day supply, and so on for the duration of the resident's medication chart.

This means that if a prescriber determines a 60-day dispense of an eligible medicine is appropriate for their patient (as they are stable on the medication for the treatment of a chronic disease), the medicine could potentially only be dispensed twice during the NRMC/eNRMC validity period (rather than four times), reducing the out-of-pocket costs for the resident.

Will all existing medication chart prescriptions (including NRMC/eNRMC) for medicines on the 60-day supply list automatically become 60-day supply?

No. Prescribers will need to generate a new prescription or medication chart prescription, indicating that 60-day supply of the medicine should occur for the patient. In electronic prescribing systems, this is done by selecting the corresponding 60-day supply PBS Item Code as part of the usual prescribing process. This is a good opportunity to review other prescribed medicines.

How do prescribers use an eNRMC for 60-day prescriptions? Will they have to stop using the eNRMC and write individual prescriptions?

The 60-day prescriptions do not affect the way medicines are prescribed using a medication chart. New PBS Item Codes have been created for medicines that are on the medicine list for increased dispensing quantities. When prescribing a medicine, the prescriber will need to enter the Item Code that corresponds to the supply quantity (ie. 60 day or 30 day) that they wish to prescribe. Prescribers *do not* need to stop using the eNRMC and write individual prescriptions.

Can a pharmacist choose between dispensing a 60-day supply or a 30-day supply?

Pharmacists will not be responsible for deciding whether to dispense a 60 or 30-day supply. They will only be able to dispense and claim against the Item Code indicated in the prescription. The Item Code specifies whether the medication is to be dispensed as a 60-day supply.

How do you manage medicine supply where a chart has expired?

A valid PBS prescription or medication chart prescription must be used for any PBS medicine supply or administration. Where a medication chart has expired, but the 60-day supply of medicines has not yet been exhausted for a patient, the supply may continue so long as the medicine has been re-prescribed on a valid PBS medication chart prescription. Administration of medication which no longer holds a valid medication chart prescription must be ceased. This is no different to a 30-day supply of medicines that hasn't been exhausted when a medication chart expires.

How will pharmacists track and manage 60-day supply for residents who receive Dose Administration Aids?

Pharmacists which pack dose administration aids for residential aged care will need to track the packing of a 60-day medicine supply in the same way all other medicines are tracked and packed. Pharmacists should only dispense and claim a further supply once the majority of the previous supply has been provided to the resident. This is no different to a 30-day supply of medicines.

Where can I find more information about 60-day prescriptions?

More information concerning 60-day prescriptions of PBS medicines is available on the Department of Health and Aged Care's [website](#).

Contact

If you have any other questions regarding 60-day prescriptions and the use of medication charts in RACHs, please contact the department on eNRMC@health.gov.au.