



FACT SHEET

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN

Primary Care – Home Medicines Services to support the response to COVID-19

Vulnerable people and people in self isolation will be able to order their Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) prescriptions remotely and have their medicines home delivered to reduce their potential exposure to COVID-19.

Why is this important?

This temporary measure will protect the most vulnerable members of our community and is available to:

- people isolating themselves at home on the advice of a medical practitioner, in accordance with home isolation guidance issued by the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee for confirmed COVID-19 cases,
- people who meet the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection after consultation with either the national COVID-19 hotline, state COVID-19 hotlines, a registered medical or nursing practitioner, or COVID-19 trained health clinic triage staff
- people aged over 70
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 50
- people with chronic health conditions or who are immunocompromised
- parents with new babies and people who are pregnant.

This measure complements the expanded use of telehealth under Medicare, and the proposed development sprint with the software industry to make electronic prescribing more widely available in eight weeks.

At present, electronic prescribing and dispensing capability is developing in Australia, but is not widely available. Some pharmacy chains currently support remote dispensing of prescriptions using a combination of mailed prescriptions, faxed/emailed prescriptions or electronic transfer of prescriptions (ETP) technology.

This is an optional, demand-driven service, temporarily available for six months.

All community pharmacies will be eligible to participate if they can support online dispensing of medicine and provide home delivery services. The Government will be working quickly with pharmacies to roll out this capability.

Who benefits?

Vulnerable people in the community, including those in self isolation, will be able to order and receive their PBS/RPBS medicines at home.