

Obtaining Medication During the Lockdown.

One of our challenges is around obtaining medication. In the last few weeks there has been people ordering and buying more medicine. This situation is like what has been seen with food and toiletries and is worrying. The increased demand for both prescribed and over the counter medicines is placing huge pressure on GP Practices and Pharmacies. We have compiled the following to give some support and guidance.

Can you still pick up repeat prescriptions?

In theory, yes – if you are well enough to do so and not showing coronavirus symptoms. But it may be worth checking if your pharmacy can deliver your medication instead. Or sign up with an online pharmacy.

Online Pharmacies

‘Many people will get their prescriptions from their local community pharmacy, in which case they should call the pharmacy and see if they have the facility in place to deliver, if not, patients can sign up with an online pharmacy. It is a simple process where you register online; it takes just two minutes. Then, when you need medication, you request it as normal from your GP. ‘Once it’s signed off by the GP, the pharmacy will deal directly with them to get everything in place and send it to your door. ‘In cases where people can’t phone up their surgery or where their surgery doesn’t allow the pharmacy to request on behalf of the patient, they will need to use the NHS app (which you can download onto your smart phone) to request their prescription.’

Pharmacy Delivery Services

Do pharmacies do prescription delivery services? We’ve kind of already answered this one, but yes, some pharmacies do deliver. Boots, for instance, do deliver if you request it online and there is no charge for repeat prescriptions. Lloyds Pharmacy use an online pharmacy service called Echo, and that is also free for repeat prescriptions. Visit the individual pharmacy websites for instructions on how to organise this.

Can you still go to the pharmacy for other medications?

Yes, although there’s a huge surge in demand for medication in pharmacies right now and they are all doing an incredible job in meeting the demands, however certain products are in short supply such as Calpol, paracetamol, thermometers and hand sanitisers. Like the supermarkets, we advise to only buy what you and your family actually need without self-hoarding, allowing others to get what they really need throughout this difficult time.’ If you need items that are low in stock, it’s always worth chatting to friends or family in the area (who are feeling well) or ask a neighbour, as others might be able to share their goods. Or, if you’re the

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one who with the stockpiling cupboard full of medications, perhaps consider sharing yours?

What to do if you need a prescription for a new condition

You can still go to the GP if you have a health issue that isn't coronavirus-related (and, again, if you don't have symptoms) – but you might have a hard time getting an appointment. Call your GP or use their online service if they have one, as they might be able to prescribe medication for you that way instead. Additional checks are currently being made prior to a face-to-face appointment but they are still available, and life must go on.

Can someone else pick up your medication for you?

Yes, if you have told the pharmacy that they are doing so, in advance. Again, if you're feeling unwell, then do not visit the pharmacy. When necessary a repeat prescription can be delivered but if a family member, carer, or neighbour/friend can collect the medication in the first instance that's advisable.

Repeat prescriptions are still available, but it's best to order ahead if you're running low. You can also call 111 for help or call your GP surgery for advice. However, if it is an unrelated regular prescription you need then as long as a prescription is present along with written consent from you then they should be able to collect it while you are still unable to leave the house.

NHS Medway and Kent Guidance.

Here are four things you can do for the NHS to help them, help you:

1 Only order medicines you need for the next month

Don't stockpile. Don't order early. Don't over order. There will be enough medicine for everyone if we follow these rules.

2 Only request home delivery services if you really need to

There has been an increase in the demand for home delivery of medicines. We need to make sure that these delivery services are available for people who truly don't have any other means of getting their medicine. So, if you have friends, family or neighbours who could collect your medicines please ask them to do so.

3 Don't ask your GP for items just because you haven't been able to get them elsewhere

We've seen an increase in people ringing their GP practice to try and get new items on prescription. Your GP practice won't prescribe items that you don't normally get.

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4 Order repeat prescriptions online

Registering for online services at your GP practice will enable you to order repeat prescriptions online. You can also set up for your electronic prescription to go directly to the pharmacy of your choice.

By doing these four things you 'll be helping the NHS, and especially our pharmacies, to cope a little better during this time. Please spread the word and encourage family and loved ones to do the same.

The Kent Together 24-Hour Helpline

The Kent Together 24-hour helpline has been set up to support vulnerable people in Kent who need urgent help, supplies or medication.

It provides a single, convenient point of contact for anyone in the county who is vulnerable and has an urgent need that cannot be met through existing support networks.

It is also the place to report any concerns about the welfare of someone else. You can contact the **Kent Together helpline** at www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether or by calling **03000 41 92 92**. It is a 24-hour service.

Support in the Gravesham Area

Gravesham Borough Council is working with North West Kent Volunteer Centre and other community partners to get vital supplies and medicines to those who need them most in our community.

If you, or anyone you know is vulnerable or self-isolating and without an immediate support network, you can ask for help.

Please go to:

<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/environmental-health/coronavirus-guidance/help-and-support/overview>

Support in the Swanley Area

Swanley Town Council is co-ordinating local volunteers in the town to make sure the most vulnerable residents are looked after.

If you are a local resident and you or a family member, friend or neighbour need supplies and cannot get out, to call 01322 665855.

For further information go to: <https://www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk/>

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Support in the Medway area

An emergency food parcel service is running in Medway. They provide home delivery for vulnerable residents who should not be leaving their home and cannot easily get food themselves.

Each parcel will include a range of non-perishable food that can help feed a family or resident for 7 days. Their dedicated staff will be delivering parcels across Medway over the next few weeks. The parcels will include a range of food and household essentials, such as:

tinned meats

vegetables

rice

cereal

various hygiene products

Each parcel will also contain information on how to stay fit, well and safe during this difficult time.

They are also providing a personal shopper service for older residents and those who are high risk and self-isolating. This option allows people to get their usual food items from the supermarket.

They have identified and contacted Medway's most vulnerable residents who may need this service.

If you're in need of urgent help and: they have not contacted you and you do not have anyone, such as family, friends or neighbours to help you; Email: emergency.foodproject@medway.gov.uk. Include your name, phone number and address.

wHoo Cares is offering a prescription and collection service for people living on the Hoo Peninsula (ME3 and Upnor). The service is provided by a small team of staff and volunteers. They will give priority to those who are vulnerable, living with a long-term health condition or not able to get prescriptions themselves and have no other support available.

Email: enquiries@whoo cares.org.uk Phone: 01634 272 138

Where can I get an emergency supply of medicine?

If you urgently need medicine, contact your prescriber immediately to arrange a prescription. If this is not possible, you may be able to get medicine from a pharmacist in an emergency, subject to certain conditions.

You must have been prescribed the medicine before. In addition to this, the pharmacist:

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- will usually need to see you face-to-face
- must agree that you need the medicine immediately
- will usually need evidence that you have been prescribed that medicine before
- must be satisfied with the dose that is most appropriate for you to take

The pharmacist may provide an emergency supply of up to 30 days' treatment for most prescription medicines, with these exceptions:

- insulin, an ointment, a cream or an asthma inhaler – only the smallest pack size will be supplied
- the contraceptive pill – only enough for a full treatment cycle will be supplied
- liquid oral antibiotics – only the smallest quantity to provide a full course of treatment will be supplied

Only a limited range of controlled medicines can be prescribed in an emergency, such as those for epilepsy (phenobarbital). Many commonly used controlled medicines such as morphine or diamorphine cannot be supplied without a prescription by a pharmacist in an emergency.

The pharmacist will then make a note in their prescription book of:

- your name and address
- the nature of the emergency
- the date of the emergency supply
- the name, quantity, form (e.g. capsules, tablets or liquid) and strength of the medicine

Even if the pharmacist is unable to give you an emergency supply of a medicine, they will advise you on how to obtain any essential medical care you may need.

Is it an NHS service?

Supplying a medicine in an emergency on the NHS may be possible in some pharmacies if you regularly take the medicine on an NHS prescription. To find out if the service is available in your area visit NHS 111 online.