

BC PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

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COVID-19 PHARMACY PROCEDURES

The best available information on the COVID-19 virus suggests that older people and those with pre-existing conditions should limit their potential exposure by remaining at home as much as possible. Patients may therefore seek early fills and/or deliveries of prescriptions to enable self-isolation. Additionally, the Provincial Health Officer has said that pharmacies may use their judgement and the options available to them to reduce non-essential physician visits, including those for prescription renewals. This may require pharmacists to act with broader latitude than they do normally.

For early fills, pharmacies may use the “UF” intervention code with the rationale “early fill to accommodate self-isolation for COVID-19” in the case of vulnerable people or those who live with them. Pharmacists should use their judgement to allow early fills in the best interests of the patient without promoting stockpiling.

Pharmacists should also not hesitate to provide emergency fills under [Professional Practice Policy 31 \(Emergency Supply for Continuity of Care\)](#), particularly in the case of expired prescriptions that would otherwise require a prescriber visit. If pharmacists have grave concerns over doing so, they should fax or phone the prescriber rather than sending the patient to the prescriber. PPP-31 provides broad latitude for pharmacist decisions on emergency supplies, provided it is in the patient’s best interest and all decisions are properly documented with rationale.

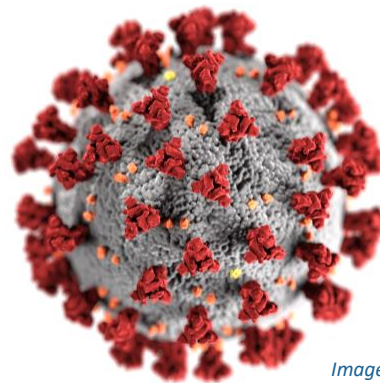


Image from CDC

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The use of PharmaNet is not intended as a substitute for professional judgment. Information on PharmaNet is not exhaustive and cannot be relied upon as complete. The absence of a warning about a drug or drug combination is not an indication that the drug or drug combination is safe, appropriate or effective in any given patient. Health care professionals should confirm information obtained from PharmaNet, and ensure no additional relevant information exists, before making patient care decisions.



Pharmacists can also provide renewals for patients in line with the expectations of [Professional Practice Policy 58 – Medication Management \(Adapting a Prescription\)](#). For more information on options available to pharmacists to accommodate prescriptions for people avoiding physician visits, or for people wanting deliveries or prescriptions picked up by others, please see [COVID-19 information provided by the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia](#).

In all cases where a pharmacist submits a PharmaNet claim for an emergency or early fill, the pharmacist MUST document it appropriately (e.g. “early fill for self-isolation for COVID-19”) to avoid subsequent audit.

The public will be asked to phone ahead to pharmacies under the following circumstances:

- They are feeling ill
- They are sending someone to pick up a prescription
- They will be asking for a renewal or an early fill
- They need a prescription delivered

This should help pharmacies manage these requests. The public will also be asked to not stockpile medication, to prevent demand-based shortages.

Please also ensure that if you are servicing a residential care facility, or long-term care (including Plan B facilities) that staff are aware of and follow infection control protocols in place at that facility.

For more information on the COVID-19 situation in B.C., please visit the BC Centre for Disease Control’s [COVID-19 page for health professionals](#). Please also note that PharmaCare will be taking direction from the Provincial Health Officer and may develop other policies or processes to further assist pharmacies in providing first-line patient care during this emergency. These will be communicated in future PharmaCare newsletters.