



COVID-19 Home Medicines Service – Information for Consumers

The COVID-19 Home Medicines Service is available for people in home isolation and for vulnerable patient groups who wish to limit their potential exposure to novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in the community.

This service supports the use of home medicines delivery options available through pharmacies enabling patients to have their Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) prescriptions delivered to their home.

Who will benefit from this service?

The service is available to:

- people isolating themselves at home on the advice of a medical practitioner, 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.

On 16 December 2021 a further extension to the COVID-19 Home Medicines Service was announced to 30 June 2022, with eligibility reset to the evolving pandemic situation. From 1 February 2022 the service is available to:

- People directed to quarantine or isolate under public health orders because they are either,
 - COVID-positive; or
 - a close contact of a COVID-positive patient; or
 - receiving COVID treatment; or
- Those who are immunocompromised.

In the case where there are existing contracts in place for the delivery of medicines to residential aged care facilities, Home Medicines Service deliveries cannot be made to residents of residential aged care facilities. Otherwise, this service is available to all patients meeting the above eligibility criteria.

If you receive your PBS or RPBS medicines in a Dose Administration Aid, you will be eligible for this service. Speak to your prescriber or pharmacist if you are unsure.

You can receive the service no more than once per month.

When will I be able to access this service?

The service commenced on 16 March 2020 and will be available until 30 June 2022.

Where will I be able to access this service?

The service is available for home delivery of medicines from any pharmacy approved to dispense and supply PBS and RPBS medicines.

Speak with your pharmacist if you are unsure.

What can I have delivered to me?

To qualify for the COVID-19 Home Medicines Service each single delivery to an eligible person's home must include at least one of the following items:

- a PBS medicine or
- a RPBS medicine.

You can order other items to be delivered to you from the pharmacy, if it is part of the same order.

You can receive the service no more than once per month.

Will I be able to have products for symptom relief delivered to me?

Only those home deliveries containing at least one of the items listed above will be eligible under the COVID-19 Home Medicines Service. Products for symptom relief such as over-the-counter painkillers, tissues and hand sanitizers are not included in the Home Medicines Service unless combined in a single delivery with one or more PBS/RPBS medicines.

Speak to your pharmacist if you are unsure.

How long will medicines deliveries take?

As delivery times may vary between different pharmacies, you are encouraged to speak to your pharmacist about expected delivery times.

Will urgent medicines deliveries be covered?

Should you require an urgent medicines delivery to your home, you are encouraged to speak to your pharmacist about available options.

How much will the COVID-19 Home Medicines Service cost me?

There is no cost for you. However, you can receive the service no more than once per month.

If you want more than one delivery per month, your pharmacy may charge a fee.

The COVID-19 Home Medicines Service is intended to support, not replace, existing home delivery options available through pharmacies. Speak to your pharmacy to find out more.

How do I order my medicines from home?

Different pharmacies have different ordering systems, including online or telephone ordering options. Your pharmacy will be able to advise you directly on the best method of ordering your medicines for home delivery.

How much funding is available for the COVID-19 Home Medicines Service?

As part of its initial \$2.4 billion health package to protect the Australian community from exposure to COVID-19, the Australian Government implemented a time-limited service to support the delivery of PBS and RPBS medicines to people in their homes.

From 16 March 2020, \$25 million has been provided by way of a fee per delivery, payable to Australian pharmacies providing an eligible medicines home delivery to eligible patients.

As announced on 14 March 2021, the Australian Government is investing more than \$1.1 billion to extend a number of the temporary measures introduced to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

This included a further \$11.5 million in funding for the COVID-19 Home Medicines Service, which will continue until 31 December 2021.

On 16 December 2021 a further extension to the COVID-19 Home Medicines Service to 30 June 2022 was announced which will continue to utilise this funding.

How can I find out more?

The COVID-19 Home Medicines Service is available from participating pharmacies across Australia. Contact your pharmacy to find out more.