

PHARMACY *update*

National edition

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MEDICATION ACCESS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With the growing COVID-19 pandemic, Green Shield Canada (GSC) has received numerous inquiries from both plan members and pharmacies around our policies concerning medication refills. To minimize the risk of drug shortages as a result of COVID-19, some officials and pharmacy organizations, including the Canadian Pharmacists Association, recommend dispensing no more than a 30-day supply of medication, unless clinically justified^{1,2,3}.

To ensure patient access to care and medication supply is not compromised during this critical time, GSC supports the recommendation from the Canadian Pharmacists Association to limit dispensing to a 30-day supply and is **relying on pharmacists, as front-line healthcare providers, to use their professional discretion** when deciding on the most appropriate days' supply to dispense to any given patient. To that end and until further notice, for the applicable jurisdictions, we are temporarily lifting the requirement to dispense maintenance medications in a 90-day supply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Where dispensing of an early refill is necessary to enable self-isolation^{4,5} but the claim is rejected by the adjudication system as an early refill, use of the intervention code **MK = good faith emergency coverage established** will enable the claim to be processed. In all cases where MK is used to enable claim adjudication, pharmacies are expected to clearly document the rationale for use to avoid subsequent audit.

¹ <https://www.pharmacists.ca/news-events/news/covid-19-and-the-responsible-allocation-of-medications-to-patients/>

² <https://www.opq.org/fr-CA/grand-public/coronavirus-covid-19/>

³ <http://blogue.opq.org/2020/02/28/coronavirus-medicaments-de-panique/>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/index.html>

⁵ <https://www.tga.gov.au/media-release/tga-response-coronavirus-covid-19>

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