

Dispensary FAQs- Related to COVID-19

General advice:

The dispensary is operating normally but subject to higher levels of enquiries due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Please, wherever possible, order your repeat medication online through the NHS App or Patient Access. Instructions on how to download and use the NHS app are here <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app/>
Please read the guidance below before ringing the dispensary.

1. Q: *Can I have an extra supply of medication?*
A: Presently, the Department for Health has issued strict guidance to adhere to present prescribing terms. Changing prescribing amounts, although seemingly straightforward, leads to problems with supply, storage, prescribing and monitoring of medications. There are not presently any shortages of medicines. The supply chain is intact and working well and we would like to support it by avoiding additional unnecessary requests. If the situation changes we will update our policy.
2. Q: *Can I order my medication (repeats) over the phone?*
A: Please see the guidance below:
3. Q: *Can I have my medication delivered?*
A: Patients in at risk groups requesting medication deliveries may be able to receive a delivery if they are unable to access neighbours, friends, families or community groups to pick up their medication. Please follow the guidance below.
4. Q: *Can I still call the dispensary for queries and information related to medication and deliveries?*
A: The dispensary staff are working very hard under increased demand. In order that they have time to fill prescriptions safely and without interruption we are dedicating specific times for them to field enquiries. Please only call the dispensary between 10am and 1pm. Please avoid attempting to call outside of these times as your call will not be answered. The dispensary hatch will operate normally.
5. Q: *Is it safe to pick up medications if I am self-isolating or social-distancing?*
A: If you are self-isolating you must follow the guidelines on self-isolation. You must not come to the surgery. Please ask those supporting you to pick up your medications.
If you are social-distancing, you should try to avoid coming to the surgery and ask those supporting you to collect and deliver your medications. All patients entering the surgery for any reason will be screened for symptoms and tested for fever. If you have symptoms or a fever you will be asked to return to your vehicle or home and call the surgery to speak to a doctor.
6. Q: *Can I have paracetamol prescribed to me because of the apparent shortage of over the counter availability?*

A: If you are already taking paracetamol that is prescribed through the practice you will continue to receive paracetamol in your prescription. We will not be able to prescribe paracetamol otherwise unless you have a new medical condition diagnosed by the doctor or nurse that requires paracetamol.

Criteria for Ordering Repeat Medication Over the Phone

1. If you are having difficulties ordering your repeat medications due to illness, self-isolation or social-distancing please consider trying the following:
 - Ask your support network (family, friends, neighbours, parish counsellor or community group) for assistance by asking them to order medications for you (by the normal methods) or helping you order medication online.

-The following community support groups are/will be in operation:

Full list - <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/emergency-planning/health-and-pandemics/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-help-for-the-community/coronavirus-voluntary-groups/>

Coronavirus Community Care Facebook Group - 07946 345859

Age UK Ashford - 01233 668765

2. If you are genuinely unable to access your support network and have no other recourse, please ring the dispensary during the allocated time (10am-1pm) to make an enquiry into ordering your repeat prescription. We will do our best to help you.

Criteria for Delivering Medications

1. The surgery will not be able to accommodate a surge in medication deliveries. If you anticipate difficulties in obtaining your medications due to self-isolation or social distancing please consider trying the following:
 - Ask your support network (family, friends, neighbours or community group) for assistance by asking them to pick up medications for you.

-The following community support groups are or will be in operation:

Full list - <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-community/emergency-planning/health-and-pandemics/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-help-for-the-community/coronavirus-voluntary-groups/>

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2. If you are genuinely unable to access your support network and have no other recourse, please ring the dispensary during the allocated time (10am -1pm) to make an enquiry into whether we can deliver your prescription. We will do our best to help you. Please be advised that we are unable to urgently deliver medications.