

Executive Officer Notice: Removal of the 30-days' Supply Dispensing Limit Recommendation

June 12, 2020

The Ontario government is making changes to help Ontarians continue to have access and be able to afford the prescription medications they need to stay at home and to stay healthy.

Effective June 15th, 2020, the Government of Ontario is ending its recommendation to dispense no more than a 30-days' supply of Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) eligible medications, which was introduced by the Ministry of Health on March 20th, 2020 to lessen the risk of drug shortages due to increased demand caused by COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak resulted in significant shortages for certain drugs and uncertainty regarding the overall Canadian drug supply. To manage drugs in short supply and prevent further shortages, Ontario, along with other provinces and territories, took decisive action to ensure that all patients, would have continued access to necessary medications.

As a result of these measures, the drug supply chain has stabilized for many medications and ODB recipients can now fill prescriptions as they did prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., they can receive up to a 100-days' supply if their prescription allows). ODB recipient co-payments will also return to their previous amounts (i.e. \$2 or \$6.11, in most cases). Dispensers will also be subject to regular dispensing fee rules for the ODB program. See here for more information:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/odbf_conditions_for_payment.aspx

Please note that the PINs used for Co-Payment Reimbursement claims for a reduced quantity due to the ministry's supply limit recommendation **will be discontinued end of day on June 21, 2020.**

There is still a need for vigilance in maintaining the national drug supply for the long-term. Therefore, it is critical for pharmacists and dispensing physicians to:

- Continue to use their professional judgement to determine appropriate quantities when dispensing drugs that may be at risk of shortages and avoid dispensing larger supplies of drugs than necessary.
- Refill prescriptions for ODB recipients no more than ten days in advance of depleting their current supply. In exceptional cases where there is a clinical reason to refill a

prescription early, the pharmacist or dispensing physician, using their professional judgement may provide an early refill and document the reason.

- Manage their inventory to avoid stockpiling, lessening the risk that other pharmacies will not be able to provide medications to their patients.

Additional Information:

For pharmacies:

Please call ODB Pharmacy Help Desk at: 1-800-668-6641

For all other Health Care Providers and the Public:

Please call ServiceOntario, Infoline at 1-866-532-3161 TTY 1-800-387-5559. In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282.