

# Questions and Answers for Funding for Minor Ailment Services in Ontario Pharmacies

**Effective January 1, 2023**

This Questions and Answers document accompanies the most recent Executive Officer (EO) Notice on the Funding for Minor Ailment Services in Ontario Pharmacies available on the [ministry website](#).

For more information, pharmacy staff may:

- refer to the Ontario College of Pharmacists' webpage on [Minor Ailments](#)
- refer to the ministry's Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Help Desk and the [Ontario Drug Programs Reference Manual](#) for Health Network System (HNS) claims issues.

## Overview

### **1. Which pharmacies are eligible to participate in this program?**

Please refer to the most recent Executive Officer (EO) Notice on the Funding for Minor Ailment Services in Ontario Pharmacies available on the ministry [website](#) for information about pharmacy eligibility.

## Eligibility

### **2. Who is eligible to receive minor ailment services from a pharmacy?**

Please refer to the most recent Executive Officer (EO) Notice on the Funding for Minor Ailment Services in Ontario Pharmacies available on the [ministry website](#) for information about an individual's eligibility.

### **3. Can an individual who does not have an Ontario health number still receive these services at a pharmacy?**

No. Only Ontarians with a valid Ontario health number are eligible to receive publicly funded minor ailment services from an eligible pharmacy.

**4. Can an individual be an ODB recipient and not have an Ontario health number?**

Yes. There may be circumstances where an individual who is an eligible Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) recipient does not have an Ontario health number. For these individuals, the temporary eligibility number (e.g., issued by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services or by a Home and Community Care Support Services organization) must be used for the HNS claim submission.

## **Ministry Payment**

**5. How much does the ministry pay for minor ailment services provided by pharmacists?**

The ministry will pay a professional fee of \$19 for providing minor ailment services in-person at the pharmacy and \$15 for providing minor ailment services virtually (from the location of the pharmacy) for an eligible individual (regardless of whether the services include a prescription being issued).

Please refer to the most recent Executive Officer (EO) Notice on the Funding for Minor Ailment Services in Ontario Pharmacies on the ministry [website](#) for more information about the claim submission process, including restrictions and exclusions.

## **Pharmacist Training**

**6. Are all Ontario pharmacists able to provide these services?**

Part A pharmacists, registered pharmacy students and interns are able to provide minor ailment services. Where the service involves prescribing of allowable medications, the prescribing must comply with the *Pharmacy Act, 1991* and Ontario Regulation 202/94 under that Act, as well as any requirements of the OCP.

Pharmacists must ensure that they have the required knowledge, clinical skills and judgement to safely prescribe for minor ailments including consulting appropriate resources if required. Pharmacists must also follow OCP's Standards of Practice to use evidence from relevant sources to inform their activities and to critically evaluate medication and related information. Pharmacists have an ethical obligation to ensure information provided to patients is current and consistent with the best available evidence.

**7. What other resources related to minor ailments are available to pharmacists?**

Please check the OCP [website](#) for additional information including clinical guidance and resources regarding prescribing for minor ailments. The [Ontario Pharmacists Association](#) may also have additional resources and tools to assist pharmacists in the expanded scope of practice for minor ailment prescribing.

## Documentation Guidelines

**8. What are pharmacists required to document when providing minor ailment services to eligible individuals?**

Please refer to the most recent Executive Officer (EO) Notice on the Funding for Minor Ailment Services in Ontario Pharmacies available on the [ministry website](#) for information about pharmacy documentation requirements.

**9. What will happen if I forget to document or misplace the documentation?**

If there is no documentation, or incorrect or incomplete documentation, the minor ailment services fee that is billed and paid may be subject to recovery by the ministry.

## Claim for payment through the Health Network System

**10. How are claims for minor ailment services submitted through the HNS?**

Please refer to the most recent Executive Officer (EO) Notice on the Funding for Minor Ailment Services in Ontario Pharmacies available on the [ministry website](#) for information.

**11. Which PIN should be used if a minor ailment service results in a prescription being issued for a non-prescription medication?**

If a prescription is issued to an individual for an over-the-counter (OTC) medication because the individual has an insurance plan that covers it, the PINs for “Rx Issued (In-Person or Virtual)” must be used to submit the claim for the minor ailment service. If an OTC product is recommended but no prescription for it is issued, then the PINs for “Rx Not Issued (In-Person or Virtual)” must be used.

## Restrictions

**12. Can pharmacists submit claims for minor ailment services manually to the ministry, using a paper claim?**

No. The ministry does not accept paper claims unless 3 intervention codes are required in order to process the claim. All claims must be submitted electronically using the HNS on the day the service was provided.

**13. Can pharmacists submit claims for other professional services like a Pharmaceutical Opinion Program fee or a fee for a MedsCheck medication review when providing minor ailment services?**

No. A pharmacy **cannot** claim a Pharmaceutical Opinion Program (POP) fee when providing minor ailment services, or when dispensing a drug for a minor ailment pursuant to a prescription issued by a pharmacist at the same pharmacy. In addition, a fee for a MedsCheck Follow-Up **cannot** be claimed in combination with a minor ailment service.

**14. How does a pharmacy know if an eligible person has reached their annual maximum number of claims for a particular minor ailment service?**

Pharmacies are strongly encouraged to check the [clinical viewers](#) to ensure that the maximum number of claims for the minor ailment has not been reached before submitting a claim. If the maximum number is exceeded, the claim will be subject to recovery.

**15. Can a pharmacy submit a claim for an in-person minor ailment service and a virtual one for the same minor ailment?**

Only one claim for minor ailment services can be submitted by a pharmacy per day per eligible person for a particular minor ailment. For example, if a minor ailment service is provided and claimed for UTIs by one pharmacy that does not result in a prescription, another minor ailment service for UTI that results in a prescription by the same pharmacy cannot be conducted and claimed on the same day.

**16. Is renewing a prescription considered eligible for billing for a minor ailment service?**

No. Renewing a prescription is not eligible for payment under this policy. For example, if a patient presents in early summer for an insect bite and then again later in the summer, another minor ailment service may not be necessary. The same prescription may be appropriate and therefore the pharmacist may decide to renew/extend the original as per

OCP [Guidelines](#) for Initiating, Adapting and Renewing Prescriptions. In this case, the pharmacist will **not** be eligible for a professional service fee for minor ailment prescribing the second time.

**17. If an individual has reached their limit per year on the number of claims for a particular minor ailment, what should the pharmacist do?**

Pharmacists should use their professional judgement in determining whether it is appropriate to refer the individual to their primary care provider if available, or to a walk-in clinic, etc. Some minor ailments may recur and pharmacists may be able to do multiple assessments. However, some that recur may also be a red flag that may warrant a referral. Note that there is an expectation for monitoring/follow-up as part of providing minor ailment services.