

## **PRESCRIPTION FAQs DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

1. How can I get early refills or extra supply of my medications?

Your prescription insurance plan, state law, and the medication type determine the quantity of medication or supplies you can fill at one time. Try these steps:

- Call your plan for information about mail order options, 90 day supply requests, and early fills
- If authorized by your plan, contact the pharmacy that fills your prescriptions to request a 3-month supply
- If needed, contact the doctor's office to approve refills or to transfer prescriptions to a mail order pharmacy.

2. **Are UCLA retail pharmacies in the Westwood and Santa Monica campuses open during COVID 19 pandemic?**

- All UCLA retail pharmacies in both campuses including UCLA specialty pharmacy are open with regular operating hours and can be reached at 310-206-DRUG.

3. **How can patients access their prescriptions from UCLA pharmacies if they are being quarantined or want to avoid going to the hospital?**

- Patients looking for alternative ways to access their prescriptions that are ready at one of the UCLA retail pharmacies, can receive medications via mail delivery. UCLA pharmacies are waiving delivery fees for all eligible prescriptions.
- Patients should talk to their pharmacists to confirm their prescriptions are eligible for delivery
- They can also send a representative to pick up their medications on their behalf if they choose.
- Some UCLA pharmacies are offering curbside pickup for convenience and social distancing.

4. I have Medicare Part D for prescriptions. Are there any special exceptions during COVID-19?

Yes. Some Medicare Part D plans allow "refill too soon" overrides under certain circumstances. For more information, please visit [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov) or call your part D plan provider directly.

5. What over-the-counter (OTC) medications can I take if I don't feel well?

IF you feel unwell, particularly if you have a fever, intense achiness, coughing, or trouble breathing, it is very important to contact your doctor immediately for assistance and direction. Typical OTC medications and their use is below.

acetaminophen (TYLENOL) may be used to help with fever  
dextromethorphan (DELSYM) may be used to help with cough

guaifenesin (ROBITUSSIN) may be used to help with secretions  
loratadine (CLARITIN) may be used to help with allergic symptoms  
famotidine (PEPCID) may be used to help with stomach acid or heartburn  
simethicone (MYLICON) may be used to help with gas

Always follow the dosing instructions and **do not take more than the recommended doses listed on the product packages.**

6. I just heard that the FDA recalled all brands of ranitidine (Zantac). Why? Should I stop taking it? What can I take instead?
  - Generic and prescription ranitidine products may contain a contaminant known as NDMA. NDMA, taken in large amounts for a very long time, may increase the risk of cancer.
  - Any OTC products should be discontinued. Please read the labels on antacids, reflux or heartburn products to check if they contain ranitidine. IF taking as a prescription, check with your doctor first before making any changes.
  - Other products that are similar to ranitidine have NOT been shown to contain NDMA. The closest equivalent is Famotidine (Pepcid).
  
7. Is it true that using non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as Ibuprofen (ADVIL, MOTRIN) could worsen coronavirus (COVID-19) disease?

According to the FDA, there is no evidence that the use of NSAIDs, like ibuprofen, can worsen COVID-19 symptoms at this time. Currently, the FDA is investigating this issue and will provide more information when it is available. Speak to your health care provider if you are concerned about taking NSAIDs or rely on these medications to treat a chronic illness. For a more detailed discussion, please visit [UCLA Health NSAID link](#) below. Dr. Otto Yang, an infectious disease expert at UCLA, comments on the issue in depth.
  
8. I heard that ACE (e.g. lisinopril, enalapril) or ARB drugs (olmesartan, losartan) should be avoided. If I think I may have COVID19, should I stop taking my blood pressure medications?

No. Both the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology recommend that you keep taking your ACE or ARB medications. If you have high blood pressure or heart disease and are diagnosed with COVID-19, it is very important to discuss with your doctor before adding or removing any treatments.
  
9. I have a chronic illness and take shots and pills that depress my immune system. Should I stop them for now?

No. It is very important to discuss with your doctor before adding or removing any treatments. Contact your doctor to build an individual plan based on your specific situation.
  
10. I think I may be pregnant. What should I do?

Contact your doctor. It is not known if pregnant women are at a greater risk from COVID-19. Additional information can be found on the [UCLA Health OBGYN FAQs website](#). See the link below.
  
11. What if I do not want to leave my house to go to my pharmacy or doctor's office?
  - Ask if your pharmacy delivers. Many of them do.

- Arrange for a friend or family member to pick them up for you. Call ahead and let the pharmacist know.
- Some pharmacies are not physically accepting credit cards or cash from patients in order to avoid close contact. When you contact your pharmacist, ask how they prefer to be paid.
- Consider using your insurance's mail order pharmacy, which can deliver medications in a 3-month supply.
- UCLA Health doctors are offering secure, private video visits for patients. Please contact your doctor's office to set up an appointment.

12. What if I do not feel well enough to go to the pharmacy?

Many pharmacies are offering to bring your prescriptions to you at the curb or in the parking lot. Call ahead and see if this is an option. However, given the current situation, please be patient as there may be a wait.

Some pharmacies are not physically accepting credit cards or cash from patients in order to avoid close contact. When you contact your pharmacist, ask how they prefer to be paid.

For further information, please visit these helpful links:

General Information:

<https://www.uclahealth.org/coronavirus>

Center for Disease Control website:

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

NSAID Expert opinion:

<https://connect.uclahealth.org/2020/03/20/can-ibuprofen-worsen-covid-19-an-expert-offers-the-truth/>

OBGYN FAQ:

[https://www.uclahealth.org/workfiles/COVID-19/COVID-19\\_OBGYN\\_patient\\_FAQs\\_3.23.20\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.uclahealth.org/workfiles/COVID-19/COVID-19_OBGYN_patient_FAQs_3.23.20_FINAL.pdf)

Additional References:

ACE & ARB drugs and COVID-19:

Patients taking ACE-i and ARBs who contract COVID-19 should continue treatment, unless otherwise advised by their physician: Statement from the American Heart Association, the Heart Failure Society of America and the American College of Cardiology, 2020 Mar 17. (<https://www.hfsa.org/patients-taking-ace-i-and-arbs-who-contract-covid-19-should-continue-treatment-unless-otherwise-advised-by-their-physician/>)

Chronic Illness and COVID-19:

Fang L et al. Are patients with hypertension and diabetes mellitus at increased risk for COVID-19 infection? Lancet Respir Med 2020 Mar 11 [e-pub]. ([https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600\(20\)30116-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600(20)30116-8))

NSAIDs and COVID-19:

FDA advises patients on use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for COVID-19, 2020 March 19. (<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-advises-patients-use-non-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs-nsaids-covid-19>)

Ranitidine (Zantac) recall:

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/questions-and-answers-ndma-impurities-ranitidine-commonly-known-zantac>

UCLA Health Department of Pharmacy Services  
Ambulatory & Community Practices  
For questions, call: (323) 22DRUGS (323 223-7847)

To reach our UCLA retail pharmacies:  
200 Medical Plaza level 1 pharmacy  
UCLA Specialty Pharmacy  
200 Medical Plaza level 4 pharmacy  
Ronald Reagan UCLA outpatient pharmacy  
UCLA 16<sup>th</sup> street pharmacy  
CHS outpatient pharmacy  
Please call (310)206DRUG (310-206-3784)