

# Health Care in Ontario: Getting Prescription Drugs

You may need to take medicine if you are sick or injured. In some cases, you can buy medicines in a drug store without seeing a doctor or nurse. These are called over-the-counter drugs.

For other drugs, you will need a doctor or nurse to give you a prescription. A prescription tells a pharmacist what drug(s) you will need to take, how often and for how many days. The pharmacist will tell you how to take the medicine safely.

What do you do with a prescription? Is there any drug plan to help cover the costs? The information you find here will help you understand:

- how to get drugs with a prescription
- who pays for prescription drugs in Ontario

*You can find this fact sheet online in more languages at [www.ontario.ca/healthcarebasics](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcarebasics). Click on the "Information in Other Languages" button. The online version will also give you links to learn more about getting medical care in Ontario.*

## 1. My doctor gave me a prescription. What do I do with it?

You need to have your prescription filled by a pharmacy (also called a drug store). You may choose a store based on factors like the location and hours of operation.

Staff will check the prescription and your personal information such as your name, address and phone number. If you have a drug plan that will help pay for your medicine, you need to provide that information. The pharmacist will tell you how to take the medicine safely. If you have any questions about taking the medicine, be sure to ask.

## 2. Does the Ontario government pay for my prescription drugs?

You may be eligible for one of Ontario's drug programs. These include:

- The [Ontario Drug Benefit Program](#). This program pays for over 3,800 drug products, including nutrition products and diabetic testing agents. All Ontarians over the age of 65 are automatically covered by this program.
- The [Trillium Drug Program](#). This program is for people living in Ontario who spend a large part of their income on prescription medicines.

Or, if you work, your employer may offer a drug plan which will pay some or all of your drug costs. If not, you will have to pay for your prescription drugs on your own.

### 3. How do I apply for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program or the Trillium Drug Program?

You must meet certain conditions to qualify for these programs.

**To join the Ontario Drug Benefit Program:** This program is mainly for seniors and people needing home or long-term care. If you are

- over age 65, and
- have a valid Ontario health card

you do not need to apply. You simply take your prescription and your health card to your drug store. Tell the pharmacist that you are now eligible for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. The pharmacist will check that you qualify through the government's Health Network System.

There are co-payments and deductibles that you will need to pay. You may be able to apply for a lower \$2 co-payment. More information is available on the [Ontario Drug Benefit Program website](#).

**Note:** You may also join this program through another Ontario health care program, such as long-term care or home care. The person who helps you apply for that program will also help you apply to the Ontario Drug Benefit Program.

**To join the Trillium Drug Program:** You can pick up an application kit at your local drug store. Or, call 1-800-575-5386. You can also [find a copy of the application form and guide online](#).

### 4. I have questions about using the health care system in Ontario. Who can I call?

Contact ServiceOntario, INFOLine between 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Staff will be able to help you in English, French and 20 other languages. Call:

- 1-866-532-3161
- TTY 1-800-387-5559
- In Toronto, TTY 416-327-4282