

Prescribing during COVID-19

- 1. The media is carrying stories surrounding certain anti-malarial, antibiotic and antiviral therapies used in the treatment of COVID-19 patients and are asking me to prescribe this as a precautionary treatment if they do contract COVID-19. Any advice?**

The three Colleges of Pharmacists, Registered Nurses, and Physicians and Surgeons have released this [joint statement](#). CPSM may be reviewing prescriptions of these drugs and prescribers must be able to demonstrate good medical care.

- 2. As a cautionary measure, should I keep an office supply of hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, or any other drug that might prove beneficial for treating COVID-19?**

No. These drugs have an intended use and prescribing these drugs as a precautionary measure leads to drug shortages and is compromising care for other patients. Additionally, should these or other drugs prove useful in combating COVID-19 their use will need to be carefully managed and preserved for those who need them the most.

- 3. Can I prescribe these drugs for myself or my family?**

No. During a pandemic when resources may become scarce, actions like these dramatically depart from the core values of medical professionalism, may be in contravention of the *Code of Ethics and Professionalism* and the Standard of Practice of Good Medical Care, and undermine the trust the public has in the profession at a time when they are most vulnerable.

- 4. My patient is in self-isolation or isolation due to a confirmed or potential positive COVID-19 test. How should I help patients access their regular medication?**

Tell the patient not to go into the pharmacy as it's important for these patients to stay home and not put patients and pharmacy professionals at risk, especially as pharmacy professionals do not have access to any personal protective equipment. Fax the prescription to the patient's pharmacy of choice and explain the situation. The patient and pharmacy can then coordinate to arrange for delivery of the medication or alternative pick-up by a family member, friend, etc.

5. On another note, should I be faxing prescriptions in accordance with social distancing?

Pharmacists are asking prescribers, where possible, to please fax prescriptions to pharmacies to minimize personal contact and wait times at the pharmacies.

PRESCRIBING AND VIRTUAL MEDICINE

1. Can I renew chronic non-M3P prescriptions by phone or fax?

It depends on the prescription and patient. Use your clinical and professional judgment and knowledge of the patient. For patients who have been on chronic stable dosing of medications, you may consider providing refills for non-M3P medications over the phone or by fax to the pharmacy or utilize Virtual Medicine options.

For example, go ahead and refill a patient's hypertension medications which have been stable for the past 12 months in a reasonable quantity.

2. What about prescribing new non- M3p medications or renewing medications undergoing active titration?

Again, it depends on the prescription and patient. Use your clinical and professional judgment and knowledge of the patient and the diagnosis or medical issue. Where appropriate, contact the patient to confirm effectiveness and tolerance of medications before authorizing refills. You can use Virtual Medicine options or in-person appointments, as appropriate.

For example, if you recently started a patient on an anti-depressant, prior to renewing the medication it would be prudent to confirm with the patient it is working and/or if an increase in dose is required. If a patient needs an antibiotic for a urinary tract infection, you may decide to prescribe using Virtual Medicine.

3. Can I prescribe M3P medications using Virtual Medicine?

Adjustments have been made to the permit prescribing M3P medications using Virtual Medicine. Read this link carefully. For M3P prescriptions (triplicates)

<https://cpsm.mb.ca/prescribing-practices-program/prescribing-practices-program-overview>

4. What about my patients that have daily dispensing of methadone or suboxone?

A guiding document for methadone and suboxone prescribers during the pandemic has been developed in collaboration with CPSM and the College of Pharmacy of Manitoba.

<https://cpsm.mb.ca/prescribing-practices-program/prescribing-practices-program-overview>

5. Should I Fax a prescription or hand the paper copy to the patient?

Where possible, please FAX prescriptions to pharmacies so that personal contact and wait times at the pharmacies are kept to a minimum.

Other Important Links Regarding Prescribing during COVID-19

[COVID-19 Prescribing & Dispensing - Dexamethasone - NEW](#)

[Ensuring Safe Access to M3P Prescriptions for Patients During COVID-19 - New](#)

[Narcotic and Controlled Drug Prescriptions for Personal Care Home Residents - New](#)

[Advice Regarding Take-Home Dosing \(Carries\) for Patients on OAT with Methadone or Suboxone](#)

[COVID-19 Guidance Regarding M3P Prescriptions for Palliative Care](#)

[Prescribing and Dispensing of Drugs to Treat COVID-19 - Joint Statement](#)