

Where's my medicine?

Your local pharmacy team works hard to make sure you can get the medicines you need when you need them. But sometimes we – like many other pharmacies – experience difficulties in getting some medicines. These issues have been getting worse due to range of factors which pharmacies cannot control.

We understand how important it is for you to have your medicines, so please be patient if we're having trouble getting your medicine. Our team is always ready to talk to you about your medicines, and we'll explain what any supply issues mean for your treatment.

Why didn't I get my medicine today?

Unfortunately, we do not always have all the medicines you need in stock. We might have some of it but not all. We could be waiting for more medicine to arrive, or we might need to get it from somewhere else. Occasionally, we might need your doctor to prescribe you a different medicine so you can start treatment sooner. We'll always let you know what is happening and the options available for you.

Why is my medicine not available?

Sometimes, we can't get certain medicines because of supply problems. This can happen when raw ingredients aren't available, there may be technical issues in the factories where the medicines are made, or some difficulty getting the medicines from one place to another. Because of this, sometimes pharmacies like ours have a shortage of specific medicines. At times when a lot of people suddenly need a medicine, we might run out until more is made. You can learn more about this on the Healthcare Distribution Association (HDA) website: hdauk.com/factory-to-pharmacy

Supply issues have been getting worse and pharmacy teams like ours spend many hours each day trying to get medicines for our patients. Pharmacies across England are also facing unprecedented challenges after funding cuts, and this can cause disruptions to services.

What are you doing to get my medicine?

If we don't have your usual medicine, we'll do our best to get it for you in the following ways:

- We can check with the people who make the medicine.
- We will look for it from different supply places, to try to find the medicine.

- We can give you some of the medicine we have in stock now and the rest when we have it later.
- We can ask other nearby pharmacies if they have it.
- We can also talk to your doctor to find another treatment option.

Sometimes it will take some time for us to work through these options – or you may be asked to talk to your GP yourself. We will always try to work together with you and your GP to get the best outcome for you.

Medicine shortages are a major problem across the country and sometimes in other parts of the world. We need the Government NHS, working with everyone involved in medicines supply, to fix this.

Why do my new tablets look different?

If we can't find your usual medicine because of a shortage, we might give you the same one from a different maker. It could look different, but it still has what you need. Sometimes, we need your doctor to change how they write your prescription to do this.

In very serious shortages, the Government might let us give you a different amount, strength, or type of medicine (for example an oral liquid instead of tablets) to help you. We'll always guide you on how to take this medicine.

Why does another pharmacy have my medicine?

Other pharmacies may have different medicines because they get them from different medicine suppliers. Sometimes, we can't order more medicines until the next month because of rules set by pharmacy wholesalers. This means there may be a limit (quota) on the number of medicines we can order each month, but this issue is usually sorted.

What do I need to do? Or how can I help?

Please speak with our pharmacy team about any concerns you have. Also please consider:

- Asking your doctor for your prescription in advance (but no more than 7 days) you may need to explain why you are asking early.
- Only getting the medicine you really need and if you have some at home, use it first (check the expiry date).
- That requesting extra medicine can sometimes make it harder for others to get the medicine they also need.

Please remember that medicine shortages are a big issue across the country, and it is largely outside the control of our pharmacy team. We work to source medicines on your behalf so please be kind to our staff.