



It Matters

Empowerment Pathways



Managing Your Pharmacy Locations

While it may seem challenging to manage medications that come from different types of pharmacies, it is important to understand the pharmacy's importance in helping you manage your health.

RETAIL

A pharmacy in which drugs are stocked and sold to patients who arrive at the store to pick up. These are the most traditional type of pharmacy locations that you commonly see around town.

MAIL ORDER

A pharmacy that delivers medications to patients through the mail directly to their homes, rather than requiring patients to show up at a store to pick up prescriptions. All initiation is done on phone or online regarding your medications.

SPECIALTY

These advanced pharmacies work with medications that often have unique requirements or require special handling and cannot be kept in stock by traditional retail pharmacies. Specialty pharmacies may deliver medications to you by retail or mail order.

HOW CAN I STAY ORGANIZED?

- Always keep a current list of medications (including over-the-counter or vitamins, herbs, or supplements) to reference in case any of the pharmacy employees have questions
- Make sure your insurance information is up to date with your pharmacy. Your pharmacy cannot bill your health plan for the medications if the information isn't accurate
- Be sure to contact your doctor before your prescription expires. That way, your doctor can submit a new prescription before you run out of medication
- Be sure to pay attention to your phone calls. Often, specialty pharmacies will call you before shipping your medication to confirm delivery. Make sure you check your voice messages frequently in case the pharmacy has been trying to reach you
- If you are using a mail order pharmacy for maintenance medication, call two weeks before you run out of medication so you don't have to worry. If time is short, you can pay for priority shipping to get the medication sooner. If you do run out, most plans have a provision for you to go to a retail pharmacy and get a limited supply to hold you over until the medication arrives in the mail
- Keep a calendar of when you should get refills so you can track when to call and re-order them
- Plan ahead when traveling. Mail order or specialty pharmacies often can ship your medicines to another location. For medicines that require special care, such as refrigeration, it is important that you are there to receive the shipment. You will need to promptly refrigerate the medicines or address any other special handling needs

SAFETY TIPS

Make sure to let your all of your pharmacies know if you have been prescribed a new medication. Even if you aren't filling the prescription at that particular pharmacy, each pharmacy should have a current listing of your medications, vitamins, and supplements to watch for drug interactions.

On the same vein, if your doctor discontinues a medication, make sure to let your pharmacies know so you don't continue to get refills, especially if your medication is set to auto refill. Having extra medication around the house isn't good, and it will save you money to discontinue the prescription with the pharmacy upfront.

Let your pharmacists know anything that could impact your use of the medicine, like if you have trouble swallowing pills, struggle to read labels, or can't remember to take your medications, etc.

It's important to maintain a good working relationship with the pharmacists at your various pharmacy locations.

Learn more at patientadvocate.org/migrainematters

