

PLAN MEMBER

update



JANUARY 2016

TAKING A MAINTENANCE DRUG? A THREE-MONTH SUPPLY IS NOW STANDARD

Effective February 1, 2016, if you are taking a “maintenance medication” you may notice a difference in the amount of medication your pharmacy dispenses to you. That’s because Green Shield Canada (GSC) will start requiring pharmacists to dispense at least a three-month supply for a number of maintenance drugs.

Why a three-month supply?

Maintenance drugs are used to control and manage a variety of chronic or long-term conditions such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Once your condition is stabilized, these medications are commonly prescribed by physicians on a life-long basis.

This change to GSC policy places a maximum of five per year on the number of dispensing fees you can be charged for your maintenance medication – that means savings for you (or your drug plan). Plus you’ll have the convenience of a three-month supply of drugs, and when you don’t have to keep going back to the pharmacy for more medication, you are more likely to be adherent to it.

Of course, there are some exceptions...

Certain drugs that treat chronic conditions but where the safety of large supplies could be an issue (e.g., antipsychotic agents), will not be dispensed in a three-month supply. Also if you are taking five or more maintenance drugs or are a resident of a long-term care facility, you can be dispensed your drugs more frequently than every three months.

And this doesn’t change our policy for **new** prescriptions of maintenance medications. They will still be limited to an initial 30-day supply to allow pharmacists to properly assess your tolerance to the drug. Once tolerance is established, GSC will require all future refills to be dispensed for a three-month supply.

If there is some other issue that requires more frequent dispensing, speak to your pharmacist as they can submit a request to GSC for an exemption to the policy.

Questions?

Just call GSC Customer Service Centre at 1.888.711.1119. Hours of operation are Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Eastern Time).