

Media Release

For immediate use

Date: 24th March 2020

Islanders urged not to stockpile medicines

Islanders are being reassured there is no need to stockpile over the counter medicines or to ask pharmacies to dispense repeat prescriptions before their valid date.

Prescribing Advisor Geraldine O’Riordan said local pharmacies had reported a surge in demand since the coronavirus outbreak, and in some cases were having to deal with double their normal requests.

Some patients are reported to have put pressure on pharmacy staff to dispense some prescriptions in advance, which is not allowed. There have also been reports of customers purchasing large quantities of over the counter medicines, such as painkillers.

Miss O’Riordan said this extra demand was put pressure on the medicine supply chain, and she appealed to islanders to act responsibly.

“Dealing with this pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for the Bailiwick. As one small community it is vital we work together to ensure that not only our own healthcare needs are met, but those of other islanders and those delivering our care.

“Every year one and a half million prescription items are dispensed in the Bailiwick. Sudden, extra demand in one month will put significant, unnecessary pressure on the supply chain, and that is something we want to guard against.

“I appeal to all islanders to act responsibly, please only ask for one month’s supply of prescription medicines at a time and please do not stockpile over the counter or pharmacy medicines.”

The earliest a pharmacy can dispense a prescription is four days before the date on the prescription. It is not valid before then.

Miss O’Riordan said they could not be dispensed any earlier.

“Pharmacy staff are not permitted to dispense extra prescriptions in advance, and it will not be helpful or productive to put pressure on them.”

Islanders who are self-isolating can ask a friend, relative or a volunteer to pick up any prescriptions as they need them, and some pharmacies also offer home delivery.

Miss O’Riordan said that other options were being actively considered, but those will take some time to organise.

People who are observing social distancing can leave repeat prescriptions at the pharmacy and call in advance to ask for it to be dispensed, so that there is minimal delay. Or they can ask a friend or relative to collect the medicine on their behalf.

Miss O’Riordan asked islanders to be understanding while pharmacies were dealing with increased workload.

“At the moment community pharmacists may, due to heavy workload, ask patients to come back later in the day or the following day for non-urgent prescriptions. This is to allow for more urgent prescriptions for medicines that are needed immediately such as antibiotics or pain killers, to be dispensed immediately”.

The most up to date information can be found online at www.gov.gg/coronavirus.

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