We’ve made changes to make sure you know about medicine shortages as soon as possible

Medicine shortages – easing the impact on prescribers and patients

Information for prescribers

Reforms to the way medicine shortages (including those arising from discontinuations or recall actions) are managed and communicated will directly benefit Australian prescribers and their patients.

These changes will ensure that you know about medicine shortages as soon as possible and can take action to minimise their effects on patients.

Mandatory reporting

Replacing the previous voluntary reporting system, the new mandatory reporting system requires medicine sponsors to report all shortages of prescription medicines and some important over-the-counter medicines within legislated timeframes (ranging from two to ten working days).

Importantly, sometimes disruptions to supply of a medicine cannot be avoided, and mandatory reporting of medicine shortages will not prevent these disruptions.

More information sooner

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) publishes information about all current and anticipated shortages of critical patient impact at https://apps.tga.gov.au/prod/MSI/search/. The TGA will also strongly encourage sponsors to publish information about low or medium impact shortages on the TGA website. The TGA can also publish information about a shortage in the interests of public health.

This means you are now better able to advise and assist patients affected by medicine shortages. You may be able to recommend alternative treatments or arrange supply of an alternative product (for example, through the Special Access Scheme).

Medicines Watch List

The reforms establish a Medicines Watch List, which identifies medicines that have been pre-assessed as being critical to the health of Australian patients. Shortages of medicines that are not on the Medicines Watch List can still be assessed as critical and therefore be subject to more stringent reporting timeframes and mandatory publication.