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| Shingles |
| Community Pharmacist Statewide Pilot - Patient handout  March 2024 |
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# Purpose

Participating pharmacists in the Community Pharmacist Statewide Pilot (the pilot) can now treat several common and low-risk health concerns, administer travel and other vaccinations and provide travel health advice.

This handout contains information about shingles treatment and costs, information for after your consultation and where to find additional support. It also outlines ways to provide feedback or make a complaint about the pilot service.

# Eligibility

To be eligible to receive treatment for shingles, you must be aged 18 years or older.

People with or without a Medicare card and international students are eligible under the pilot.

# Your consultation

To ensure you receive safe and appropriate care, your pharmacist will assess you in a private consulting room.

Following your treatment, if you provided your contact details to your pharmacist during the consultation, you will receive an SMS or an email from the Department of Health in 7 days to check how your treatment went.

### Providing your consent

Your pharmacist will provide you with the Consent to Treatment and Privacy Information sheet. This contains information about the consents for the pilot.

### What to expect during the consultation

The pharmacist will ask you questions before and during your consultation. This will help them decide if they can treat you.

Please provide the pharmacist with as much information as possible.

Details like your age, the severity of your condition and your medical history will be considered when deciding whether antiviral medication will work for you or whether you need a referral to a doctor or hospital emergency department for treatment.

If your pharmacist refers you to a doctor or emergency department, they will explain the reasons to you.

These may include:

* You are pregnant and have not had chicken pox before
* You are breastfeeding an infant under one month old.
* Your rash requires medical assessment because it appeared more than 72 hours ago, is infected or is affecting your ability to see, hear or smell.

# What to do if your symptoms do not improve

Your rash should heal within 2-4 weeks, although in some cases this may be longer.

You should see your doctor if:

* Your body is not responding to treatment
* Your symptoms get worse
* The rash begins to affect other areas of the body.

# Preventing transmission

You will be infectious for 1-2 days before your rash appears, and until the rash has dried and scabbed (usually 5 days after your rash appeared).

During this time your rash should be covered with appropriate dressings. Contact with pregnant people and people with low immunity must be avoided.

If you have had contact (household contacts or where there has been direct face-to-face contact for 5 minutes or in the same room for longer than an hour) with pregnant people, people who are breastfeeding, babies less than a month-old or an immunocompromised individual, you will need to ask them to seek medical care as soon as possible.

# Self-care

There are additional self-care measures that may make you feel better:

* Applying hydrogels such as Solugel™ or Solosite™ to help healing and prevent scarring
* Wearing a dressing on the affected area to prevent transmission
* Wearing loose-fitted cotton clothing to avoid irritation.

# Where to get more information

For more information, please visit the following websites:

* [Better Health Channel information - Shingles](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/shingles) <www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/shingles>
* Health Direct - [Shingles](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/shingles)  
  <www.healthdirect.gov.au/shingles>

# What will it cost?

The pharmacist consultation is free.

## Medicine costs

If you are an Australian resident with a Medicare card, you will pay no more than your current Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) co-payment for medicines supplied under the pilot. This includes concession card holders and those eligible for subsidised medicine under the Closing the Gap (CTG) program.

A valid Medicare card and a valid concession card or cards must be shown on request to be charged the subsidised amount.

If a medicine is not listed under the PBS, you will pay full price, the same as you would if you had a prescription from your doctor.

#### Overseas visitor/international student

If you are an overseas visitor or an international student from the following country, you are eligible to access subsidised medicines under the pilot by showing your passports or a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement (RHCA) Card:

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| * United Kingdom * Ireland * New Zealand * Malta | * Italy * Sweden * The Netherlands * Finland | * Norway * Belgium * Slovenia |

Overseas visitors not included in the above list of countries will pay the cost of a private script for any medicines supplied under the pilot.

The medication costs supplied under the pilot will be adjusted in line with the indexation of PBS patient co-payments on 1 January 2024.

## Safety Net

Please be aware that any medications provided in the pilot will **not** contribute to your Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Safety Net.

However, medications you are supplied will be provided in line with Safety Net pricing for people who have exceeded the annual threshold.

If you prefer that your medications *do* contribute to your Safety Net total, then you will need to see your doctor for a prescription.

# How to make a complaint

Information on the complaints processes for patients is available at [www.health.vic.gov.au/feedback-and-complaints](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/feedback-and-complaints)

If you have a complaint, you can take the following steps to get the complaint resolved:

**Step 1.** Discuss your complaint with a staff member from the community pharmacy where you received the service.

**Step 2.** If the complaint cannot be resolved at Step 1, or you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can choose one of the following ways to lodge a formal complaint with the department:

* Submit the complaint online via our online form: <https://feedback.dhhs.vic.gov.au/layout.html#/DH>
* Email our Feedback and complaints team via [health.feedback@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:health.feedback@health.vic.gov.au)
* Mail: Health Feedback, GPO Box 4057, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000.
* Phone:1300 229 075. For more information, see our Contact us page: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/contact-us>

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