

COVID-19 SUMMARY GUIDANCE #3

Pharmacy operations and facilities: ensuring safety for all and continuity of service

Professional oversight/managing pharmacist

In case the managing pharmacist cannot assure his/her presence and role at the pharmacy, these can be taken up by a second pharmacist who may or not belong to the pharmacy personnel.

Opening hours

In case a pharmacy cannot assure its normal opening hours due to non-availability of staff, the new opening hours should be displayed in a visible place at least outside the pharmacy.

Patient/customer service

In order to assure the continuity of the supply of medicines and services to communities where there is only one pharmacy in a community, contact with patients/customers should be minimised by dispensing medicines through a small window on the facade or door, like those often used for night services. Pharmacies in general are also advised to dispense medicines through such a window whenever it is necessary to minimise contact while ensuring continuity of service.

A transparent plastic shield can also be placed on the counter or in front of the dispensing area, and marks placed on the ground to indicate the 1 or 2m distance that is to be kept between customers and staff.

In case neither of these measures is possible, patients/customers should not enter the pharmacy and pharmacists are advised to use appropriate individual protective equipment, where needed.

In order to avoid having too many people inside the pharmacy, patients/customers should wait outside the pharmacy. Patients/customers should keep a distance of 1 to 2 metres between them while waiting .

Medicines supply

Whenever possible, delivery of medicines to pharmacies should be done without the courier entering the pharmacy (or at least the non-public areas of the pharmacy). Cases used by wholesale distributors for the delivery of medicines should be cleaned and disinfected before they are taken inside the pharmacy facilities.

Medicines home delivery

In order to ensure the appropriate supply of medicines to patients and the public, and especially in small towns where other pharmacies may have closed, open pharmacies may organise the home delivery of medicines. Pharmacies that are able to offer this service are encouraged to do so, especially for patients who are in home quarantine or isolation, who belong to a high risk group or who have reduced mobility.

In the case of home delivery, the person making the delivery should avoid any direct contact with the patient and their possessions. Medicines and other items can be left outside the door of the patient/customer or in another designated place, and the deliverer should keep a safe distance of 1 to 2 metres while visually ensuring that medicines are collected by the patient or an authorised person.

For details and supporting references, consult the complete guidance document at www.fip.org/coronavirus

This document is based on the available evidence and recommendations of reputable organisations at the time of publishing. It will be updated as new knowledge becomes available. 26 March 2020.

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