

# INCREASING PRESCRIBING LENGTHS



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government

From early 2026, New Zealanders will benefit from a major improvement in medicine access, with the Government extending the maximum prescription duration from 3 months to 12 months to make managing long-term health conditions easier and more affordable.

## ► What's changing?

- **Currently:** Most prescriptions are limited to 3 months. Patients must return to their prescriber for repeats.
- **From early 2026:** Prescribers can issue prescriptions for up to 12 months, if it is safe and appropriate.
- Medicines will still be dispensed every 3 months from pharmacies.

## ► What it means for you

- Your doctor will decide if a 12-month prescription is appropriate based on your health.
- You'll still pick up your medicines from a pharmacy at least every 3 months.
- But you won't need to return to your doctor for a repeat prescription each time.

## ► Backed by investment

- Budget 2025 is investing \$91 million over four years to fund the increased demand for medicines.
- This change ensures New Zealanders get the right medicines at the right time, without unnecessary barriers.

## Improving access for patients

### ► Saving time and money

- The average patient who needs to renew their prescriptions four times annually could save up to \$105 per year on GP fees.
- Fewer visits to the doctor for repeat prescriptions.
- Less time off work or school for appointments.
- Reduced travel – especially for people in rural and remote areas.

### ► Easier access to medicines

- More flexibility for patients and prescribers.
- Better support for people with long-term, stable conditions like:
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Epilepsy
  - Menopause

## Delivering better outcomes

### ► Better use of health services

- Frees up doctors' time to see other patients.
- Being able to see a doctor more quickly means less pressure on emergency departments and other hospital services.

### ► More convenience. Less cost. Better care.

The 12-month prescription policy is a common-sense change that supports healthier lives by removing red tape and making healthcare work better for everyone.

