

**GUIDANCE**  
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organisations

## Position Statement

# Medicines shortages and COVID-19

The TGA has carriage for the publication of medicines shortages as advised by the sponsors (manufacturers or suppliers) of those medicines.

From January 2019, sponsors are required to report all shortages of reportable medicines. The TGA mandatorily publishes information about all shortages that have a critical patient impact. Information about medium or low impact shortages may also be published where the sponsors agree to it or if the TGA determines that it is in the interest of public health.

[Search medicines here.](#)

The **Medicines Watch List** is a legislative instrument setting out a list of known critical medicine ingredients. It assists sponsors and the TGA to simplify and speed decision-making when deciding if a medicine shortage or permanent discontinuation may have a critical patient impact. The Medicines Watch List was determined in December 2018. The list of ingredients included in the Medicines Watch List has been derived from a consensus review of existing state hospital Emergency and Life Saving Drug Lists and the World Health Organization's Model List of Essential Medicines that are contained in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG).

Continuity of care for those discharged from hospital to a community setting becomes an increasing challenge during a pandemic. In a transition of care, management of medicines requires strong coordination between the discharging health service, the primary care practitioner and the consumer. Documentation of a patient's medicines at discharge and communication to the primary care practitioner of the medication management plan potentially assume greater importance for people who were admitted to hospital because of positive diagnosis for COVID-19 and have recovered.

Community pharmacies are responding to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and a number of the state and territory Departments of Health have provided guidance for community pharmacies. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian Medical Association (AMA) also provide guidance.

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If you have feedback regarding this position statement, please email: [medsafety@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:medsafety@safetyandquality.gov.au)