



Taking a specialty medicine tends to be more complex and expensive than taking a traditional medicine. The Specialty Pharmacy Toolkit is designed to help both patients and the professionals who care for them understand what typically happens after a specialty medicine is prescribed and how specialty pharmacies support the process.

The toolkit provides professionals with a detailed overview of the patient journey, and contains patient education materials that explain specialty medicines, describe the key steps along the journey, and provide guidance on what to expect from a specialty pharmacy.

Resource for Health Professionals

Helping Patients Navigate the Specialty Pharmacy Experience

The Purpose of this Fact Sheet

This fact sheet is intended to provide health care professionals and others in patient support roles with an overview of specialty medications and specialty pharmacies so they can better assist patients in navigating the specialty pharmacy journey.

The Growing Specialty Medicine Market

The number of specialty medications has risen quickly and continues to grow at a rapid pace. In the early 1990s, fewer than 30 specialty medications had been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). By 2017, more than 400 were on the market. Many more specialty medications are introduced each year. For instance, in 2019, about two-thirds of the novel therapies introduced were specialty medications.^{1,2} Until recently, specialty drugs were only available to treat serious and complex conditions, such as cancer and rheumatoid arthritis. Today, a wide variety of diseases and conditions are treated with specialty drugs. For instance, people with common health conditions, such as asthma and atopic dermatitis, can be helped with specialty drugs.³ In addition, medicines have been developed to treat serious rare diseases, such as sickle cell disease and hemophilia.^{4,5} In some cases, a specialty drug may be the only treatment available for a life-threatening disease.⁶

Specialty medications are broadly defined as high-cost, complex treatments.⁷ Many are biologics, which the FDA defines as follows:

"Biological products include a wide range of products such as vaccines, blood and blood components, allergens, somatic cells, gene therapy, tissues, and recombinant therapeutic proteins. Biologics can be composed of sugars, proteins, or nucleic acids or complex combinations of these substances or may be living entities such as cells and tissues. Biologics are isolated from a variety of natural sources — human, animal, or microorganism — and may be produced by biotechnology methods and other cutting-edge technologies."⁸

Some patients may require biomarker, genomic, or other testing to determine the treatment most likely to result in a favorable response.⁹ Because many specialty medications are more complex than traditional medicines—for example, they require special storage or handling, they may be administered in monitoring—most patients need education about what to expect during treatment.¹⁰

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Helping Patients Navigate the Specialty Pharmacy Experience

This 11- page fact sheet gives health care professionals and others in patient support roles an overview of the specialty pharmacy process so they can educate and assist patients who may have questions and concerns. Topics covered include:

- An overview of the specialty medicine market, including the growing number of specialty drugs that are available for a variety of diseases and conditions
- A description of the unique services and supports offered by specialty pharmacies
- A discussion of the common challenges patients face when prescribed a specialty medicine

Resources for Patients

More than Medicines: The Role of Specialty Pharmacies

Introduction

Your doctor has prescribed a medicine that must be filled by a specialty pharmacy. This fact sheet provides some basic information about specialty pharmacies. It will help you learn about and use the services and supports that specialty pharmacies provide.

This fact sheet includes some words and phrases that may be new to you. These terms are highlighted in red and defined in the glossary on page 5.

What is a Specialty Pharmacy?

Specialty pharmacies dispense (fill) specialty medicines (see box to the right). In addition, specialty pharmacies provide guidance and support to patients 24 hours a day.¹ They help people with a variety of health problems, ranging from rare or complex diseases to more common conditions.² Conditions that are treated with specialty medicines include:^{3,4}

- Asthma
- Cancer
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Multiple sclerosis
- Hemophilia
- HIV/AIDS
- Growth hormone deficiency
- Cystic fibrosis

Some specialty pharmacies are located in hospitals, medical offices, retail stores, or elsewhere.⁵ But many of the large specialty pharmacies provide their services remotely. Most of your contact with pharmacy staff will be over the phone, by email, by text, or on the pharmacy's website or mobile app.^{6,7}

What Are Specialty Medicines?

Specialty medicines typically have one or more of the following features:^{8,9,10}

- They treat serious and complex conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis and cancer. They are also used to treat rare diseases, such as hemophilia and sickle cell disease.
- Many are biologic products. Biologic products are derived from a variety of natural sources (human, animal, or microorganism). They may be produced by biotechnology and other leading-edge technologies.
- They often need special storage and handling.
- They may require more patient education and monitoring from a health care provider than other medicines.
- Most cost more than traditional medicines.
- They are not commonly dispensed at local retail pharmacies. These pharmacies cannot typically provide the additional patient education or special storage and handling needed with specialty drugs.

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More than Medicines: The Role of Specialty Pharmacies

This fact sheet explains what a specialty pharmacy is, describes the services and supports these pharmacies offer, provides a glossary of terms, and offers tips to understand and get the most from treatment.

Access these resources at pfiizer-architools.com.

Specialty Pharmacy Toolkit

Specialty Medicines: Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction

Your doctor has prescribed a medicine that's considered a specialty medicine. This fact sheet will help you learn about specialty medicines and answer some questions you may have. This fact sheet includes some words and phrases that may be new to you. These terms are highlighted in red and defined in the glossary on page 6.

What is a specialty medicine?

Specialty medicines typically have one or more of these features^{1,2}:

- They treat serious and complex conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis and cancer.
- They are also used to treat rare diseases, such as hemophilia and sickle cell disease.
- Many are biologic products. Biologic products are derived from a variety of natural sources (human, animal, or microorganism). They may be produced by biotechnology and other leading-edge technologies.
- They often need special storage and handling.
- Patients who use specialty medicines may require more education and monitoring from a health care provider than is needed with traditional medicines.
- Most cost more than traditional medicines.
- They are not commonly dispensed at local retail pharmacies. These pharmacies cannot typically provide the additional patient education or special storage and handling needed with specialty drugs.

Health plans may classify specialty medicines differently. Check your health plan's formulary (drug list) to see what your plan considers a specialty medicine.

How do I take my specialty medicine?

Specialty medicine can be taken in various ways³:

- By mouth
- As an injection (a shot)
- By infusion
- Inhaled (breathed in)

If your medicine must be given to you with the help of a health care provider, it may be done at^{4,5}:

- Your home
- Your doctor's office
- A hospital
- An outpatient facility (for example, an infusion center)

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Specialty Medicines: Frequently Asked Questions

This educational fact sheet uses simple terms to explain specialty medicines and answer common questions, including:

- How can specialty medicines help me?
- Where can I get my specialty medicine?
- Why do specialty medicines cost more?
- What can I do if I can't afford my specialty medicine?

Specialty Pharmacy: The Patient Journey

Being on a specialty medicine tends to be more complex than taking a traditional medicine.^{1,2} This fact sheet will help you understand what to expect after your doctor prescribes a specialty medicine for you.

The fact sheet includes some words and phrases that may be new to you. These terms are highlighted in red and defined in the glossary on page 13.

An Overview of the Patient Journey

The typical patient journey involves three phases (see the exhibit below):

- Prior to starting your specialty medicine:** Before you start your treatment, you may need to get insurance approval and learn about your medicine. You will also want to understand the costs associated with your medicine and seek financial assistance, if needed. In addition, you'll need to find out if the medicine will be shipped or made available for pick up, if applicable.
- Treatment:** Various factors influence what your treatment will be like. These include the following:
 - How will the medicine be administered? For instance, is your medicine a pill that you take by mouth? Is it inhaled? Does the medicine need to be given by injection (shot) or by infusion?
 - Will you or your caregiver need to learn how to administer the medicine? Does a health care professional need to administer the medicine? For example, you can take pills by yourself. But many infusion medicines must be administered by a health care professional.
 - Monitoring:** While on your medicine, you will need regular monitoring to ensure the medicine is working effectively.

Each of these three phases is described in detail on the following pages.

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Specialty Pharmacy: The Patient Journey

This guide helps patients be better prepared by explaining what to expect after they are prescribed a specialty medicine. The patient journey is illustrated for easy understanding, and divided into three major parts:

Before starting a specialty medicine: In this section, patients learn about:

- Getting insurance approval for their specialty medicines
- Understanding out-of-pocket costs associated with the medicines
- Seeking financial assistance, if needed
- Determining how to obtain and store the medicines, if applicable

Treatment: Organized by route of administration, this section helps patients learn the basics of treatment and provides helpful do's and don'ts to achieve the best treatment outcomes.

Monitoring: This section explains how some patients may need ongoing clinical monitoring to ensure their medicine is working effectively.

Access these resources at pfizer-architools.com.