

What is a pharmacy?



Quick Reference Guide

What does a pharmacist do?

What is a pharmacy?

Are there different types of pharmacies?

Can pharmacies do more than just give out prescription medicine?

 [Medical Services](#)

 [Health Promotion Appointment](#)

What does a pharmacist do?

A **pharmacist** is a healthcare provider that is responsible for filling prescriptions. They can answer questions you may have about the medicine, including how to take it or common side effects.



If you need a prescription, schedule a visit with a provider first. This may be your primary care provider or a medical specialist.



What is a pharmacy?

In the United States, a **pharmacy** is where you go to pick up medicine. The types of medicine available include:

Type	Explanation	Cost
Prescription medications	Medicines that are prescribed by a health care provider. Can only be purchased through a pharmacy in the amount designated by the prescriber.	These are billed to insurance, which may cover some or all the cost.
Behind-the-counter medications	Medicines that do not require a prescription, but they do require the assistance of a pharmacist or pharmacy tech to buy. They may have restrictions on who or how much can be purchased.	These are purchased through out-of-pocket costs.
Over-the-counter medications	Medicines that can be purchased without a prescription.	These are purchased through out-of-pocket costs.

Are there different types of pharmacies?



Pharmacies may be their own business, or they may be located in a larger store.

For example, many grocery stores have a pharmacy built into them.



Hospitals and some medical facilities also have pharmacies on site.

There are also specialty pharmacies. They handle medicine for complex conditions that require more patient support or are high cost.



There are also mail-order pharmacies.

These pharmacies don't have a physical location – your healthcare provider or insurance company orders the medicine directly to where you live.

Can pharmacies do more than just give out prescription medicine?

Yes. Some pharmacies may have many different services and supplies, including:

- Some food items, household cleaning supplies, toiletries and personal hygiene products
- Over-the-counter medications
- General health supplies like crutches, at-home testing kits for common respiratory infections or diabetes, or vitamins and supplements

Some pharmacies may have general, non-emergency healthcare providers attached to them. These providers can diagnose general health issues, perform basic lab tests, and write prescriptions. Many pharmacies also provide routine vaccinations.



[Back to Top](#)

