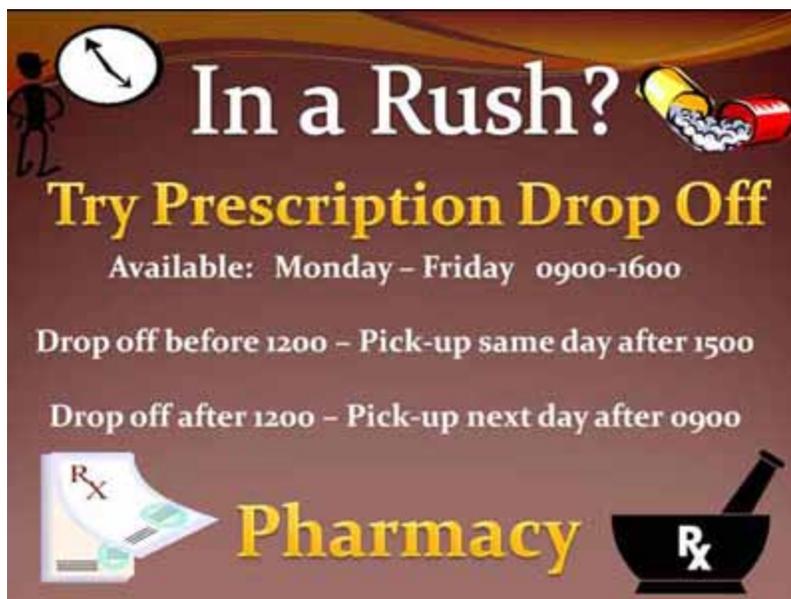


Patients have many options for picking up prescriptions

By Brandy Gill
CRDAMC Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas – You wake up sick, call for an appointment, drag yourself to the doctor's office where you get a prescription, and now on top of feeling terrible you're also irritable because you know your next stop is the pharmacy.

No one likes waiting for a prescription when they aren't feeling well or on a tight schedule.



In a Rush?
Try Prescription Drop Off
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Drop off after 1200 - Pick-up next day after 0900
Pharmacy

That's why the Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center Department of Pharmacy offers several options that shorten pharmacy waiting times. Lt. Col. Gwendolyn Thompson, chief of the pharmacy department, said.

"We regularly receive feedback from patients about the time it takes to get prescriptions filled at the hospital pharmacy. Many of our patients aren't aware that there are many options available that eliminate or greatly reduce their wait," she said.

The most convenient way to get medicine when you're feeling rotten is to already have medicine available. That is the "self-care" option, and it is especially helpful when you or a family member have a minor illness or injury that doesn't require a visit to the doctor.

All you need is a self-care card and a military identification card to receive up to four over-the-counter medications a month without an appointment or a prescription. You can pick them up at any pharmacy, (except the Refill Pharmacy) to include the Thomas Moore Health Clinic drive-thru pharmacy.

Some of the medicines you can get through self-care are Tylenol, Motrin, antacids, diarrhea medications, hydrocortisone for itching, and bacterial cream for infections. For a complete list of available over-the-counter medications and instructions on obtaining a self-care card, talk to your pharmacist.

CRDAMC pharmacy and Thomas Moore Health Clinic pharmacy also offer a prescription drop-off option, and it's the best choice for long-term medication renewals.

At CRDAMC pharmacy, anytime during the day pull an "E" ticket. Once your number is called give your prescription to the pharmacist, get a blue ticket stub and then you can go back to work, run errands, or even grab a meal.

At Thomas Moore Health Clinic pharmacy, simply walk up to an available window and request the drop-off service.

When you return for your prescription, you don't have to get another ticket. You just take your blue stub to the customer service window and pick up your prescription. The minimum turnaround time for this option is two hours, but patients don't have to wait in line. Prescriptions can be picked up your convenience, like at lunch, after work or even the next day, and there are still no out-of-pocket costs.

The Tricare mail order pharmacy is another way to get medications.

This is a very convenient option because a wider variety of medications is available and prescriptions are delivered directly to your house. You will save money in fuel costs and not have to worry about traffic, parking or waiting in line at the pharmacy.

There are small co-pays for this convenient service. Usually those fees are \$3 for generic prescriptions, \$9 for brand names and \$22 for non-formulary medications.

To use the Tricare mail order pharmacy just ask your doctor to write a new prescription for up to a 90-day supply (with three refills) of your medication. Then log on to www.express-scripts.com and print a prescription order form, or call 1-877-363-1303. Once you've filled out the form mail it with your written prescription and payment to the address on the form.

Of course there is always the fourth option, which would be to take your written prescription to a retail pharmacy off post.

Sometimes this option is necessary, especially if the military pharmacy doesn't carry the prescribed medication and you need it immediately.

At retail pharmacies you will still have the same co-pays as the mail order option, but you don't have to wait for the prescriptions to be delivered.

There are other benefits for using a retail pharmacy, too, like shopping while you wait or easy drive-thru access. If you live off post it may also be closer to home.

Regardless of your choice, it's important to remember the CRDAMC staff is ready to help you, Col. Patrick Sargent, the CRDAMC commander said.

"Our Soldiers and their families are our top priority. Providing them with excellent care in a timely manner is important, and we understand that," he said. "However, what works for one person may not work for another. That's why we continue to look for ways to improve our services by providing options that allow our beneficiaries to choose what works best for them."