

# Helping Canadians deal with drug shortages

**What is a drug shortage?** A drug shortage is when there isn't enough **supply** of a drug to meet **demand**.



## WHY do drug shortages happen?

Drug shortages are a global issue and can happen for many reasons:



**HEALTH CANADA** takes a leadership role in convening all players to try to prevent shortages. When this is not possible, Health Canada works with these players to detect, assess, analyse, mitigate and monitor them.

## HOW are drug shortages prevented or managed?

Preventing and managing a drug shortage takes effort from many players:

**HEALTH CANADA** uses regulatory tools to permit more supplies, including the importation of **foreign-authorized drugs**

**HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS** identify **safe and effective alternatives**

**DRUG MANUFACTURERS** must **report** anticipated and actual shortages and discontinuations of certain drugs to Health Canada.  
**Increase production** or expedite resupplies

**PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES** work with hospitals, pharmacists, retailers and distributors to **manage supply**

**DISTRIBUTORS** monitor inventory and **accelerate delivery** of resupplies

**PHARMACISTS** counsel patients, **conserve drugs** where possible and dispense based on need



## WHAT can you do to help?

Only purchase the drugs you need. This will help to ensure that others have access to needed supply.

Speak with a doctor or pharmacist for advice on alternatives or how to conserve supply.