



**MEDICAL BENEFITS SCHEME (MBS)**

# PHARMACY BOOKLET

*"We*  *Care"*  
**Medical Benefits  
Scheme**

## **ABOUT US**

The Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS) provides financing for public health, pharmaceuticals, and medical supplies that are distributed to institutions, such as, the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), AIDS Secretariat, Fiennes Institute, and Her Majesty's Prison.

Moreover, the Medical Benefits Scheme has a network of pharmacies strategically located in Antigua and Barbuda to provide medication to our beneficiaries. While MBS continues to promote more active lifestyles and healthy eating, through our pharmacies, we also help beneficiaries manage up to eleven (11) chronic non-communicable diseases; Asthma, Cancer, Certified Lunacy (mental illness), Cardiovascular Diseases, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Glaucoma, Hypertension, Leprosy, Parkinson's Disease, and Sickle Cell Anaemia.

At our satellite pharmacies, mostly attached to the community health clinics at Clare Hall, Browne's Avenue, Grays Farm, All Saints, and Bolans, we dispense medications (for example, cough medicine, vitamins, antibiotics) on behalf of the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Environment (MoH).

## **ABOUT OUR STAFF**

At each pharmacy location, MBS has a team of qualified pharmacy staff.

## **ABOUT OUR MEDICATIONS**

A committee consisting of pharmacists and physicians sets a list of medications to help our beneficiaries manage the eleven (11) covered diseases, and MBS sources authentic brands from reputable sources.

## **Special Events**

Look out for pop-up screenings and other special events promoting healthy lifestyle.



## Who can access the pharmacy services?

You can as long as you are registered with the MBS, have been diagnosed by a registered doctor with one or more of the eleven (11) covered chronic non-communicable diseases, and present a valid prescription and your MBS card.

To sign up for these services, visit our Registration Department on Nevis Street with the following documents:

- Valid Passport
- Social Security Card

People born in Antigua & Barbuda have the option of presenting their birth certificate and two (2) government issued identification cards (Social Security Card included).

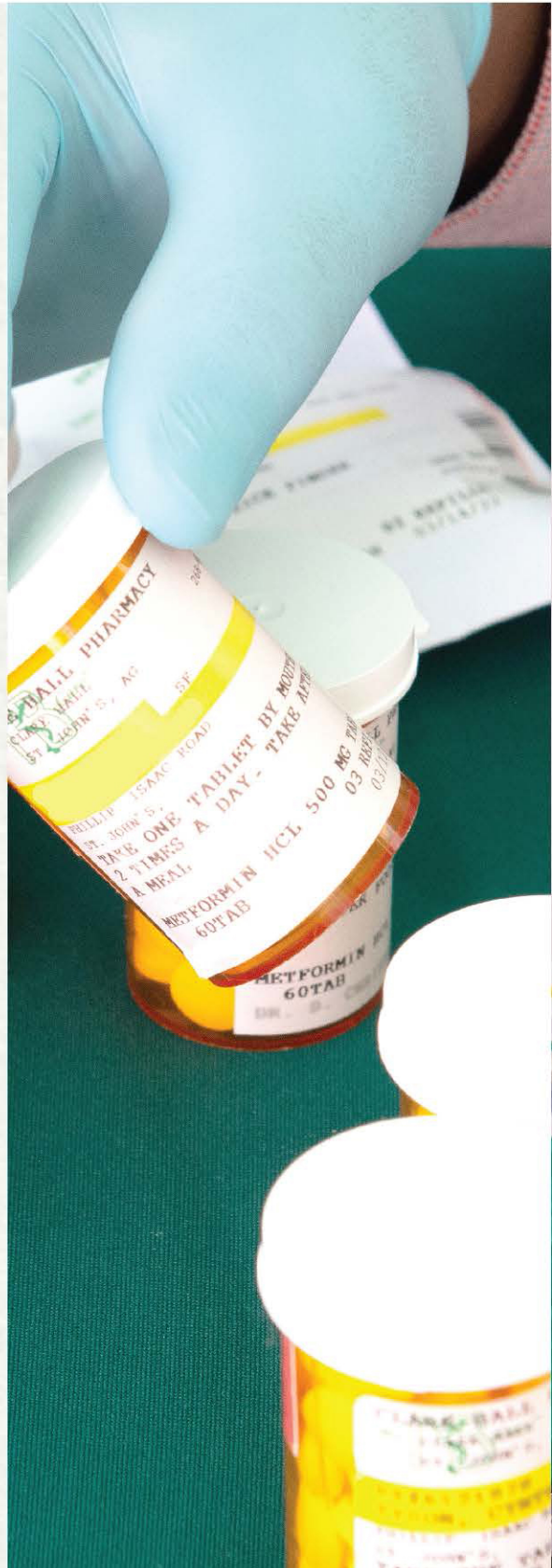
All registered beneficiaries have full access to MBS Pharmacy services (pharmaceuticals, Special Authorized Drugs *see page 7*, Glaucometers *see page 8*).

## How can Beneficiaries access our Pharmacy Services?

Access our pharmacy services by dropping-off your prescription and collecting your medication in five business days or as stipulated by the pharmacy staff.

*Walk in same day service is also available.*

*See back for pharmacy hours & locations*



## What is a prescription?

A prescription is a legal document written by a medical practitioner requesting that a pharmacist provide medicinal treatment to a specific patient. A prescription's life begins from the date the doctor writes it to the end date of the last refill. By law, a prescription cannot be filled for more than six months at any one time.

## What makes a prescription valid?

A valid prescription has the patient's name, the date of issue, and the doctor's signature and stamp.

### **A prescription is valid for not more than 6 months.**

*(Example of prescription on page 10-11)*

## How many times can a prescription be filled?

A prescription is personal; it depends on:

1. The amount of refills your doctor has requested for you
2. The date of the prescription
3. How often you present to fill the prescription
4. Eg. '3 refills' means:
  - a. 1st fill
  - b. 3 refills thereafter
  - c. refills are for consecutive months

*If you miss a month, you miss a fill!*

## When should I refill my prescription?

We advise our beneficiaries to refill their prescription up to 7 days before the last pill.

## Can I make a note on my prescription?

The only people who can write on a prescription are the doctor who originally wrote it, and who can make a change or correction to it, and the pharmacist who can make a note of the date each time a prescription is filled. It is a legal document and anyone else writing on or otherwise tampering with it is not allowed, and could even result in legal action.

## What if my prescription is soiled?

Take care of your prescription to avoid it getting soiled with grease, blood, dirt, any undesirable substance or water. The pharmacist reserves the right to refuse any soiled prescriptions.

## Can I pick up medication on someone's behalf?

Yes! To collect medication on behalf of someone, you are required to have the beneficiary's MBS smartcard, an MBS authorization card and the person collecting must have a valid government issued photo ID.

## Why do I sometimes wait a while to receive my medication?

### **Stage 1: Collection**

*The pharmacist collects and enters the details of your prescription. Your doctor may be contacted to verify the information stated.*

### **Stage 2: Search**

*An assistant locates and counts the prescribed medication. The medication is then handed to a technician.*

### **Stage 3: Dispensing**

*Finally, the medication is delivered to the pharmacist who ensures the information on and in the package are correct as a final check before the medication is handed over to you.*

### **Be sure to check your bag before leaving**

After collecting your medication and before leaving the pharmacy, do check to see what is inside your bag to ensure you have received the medication you need.

### **What happens when we are out of stock?**

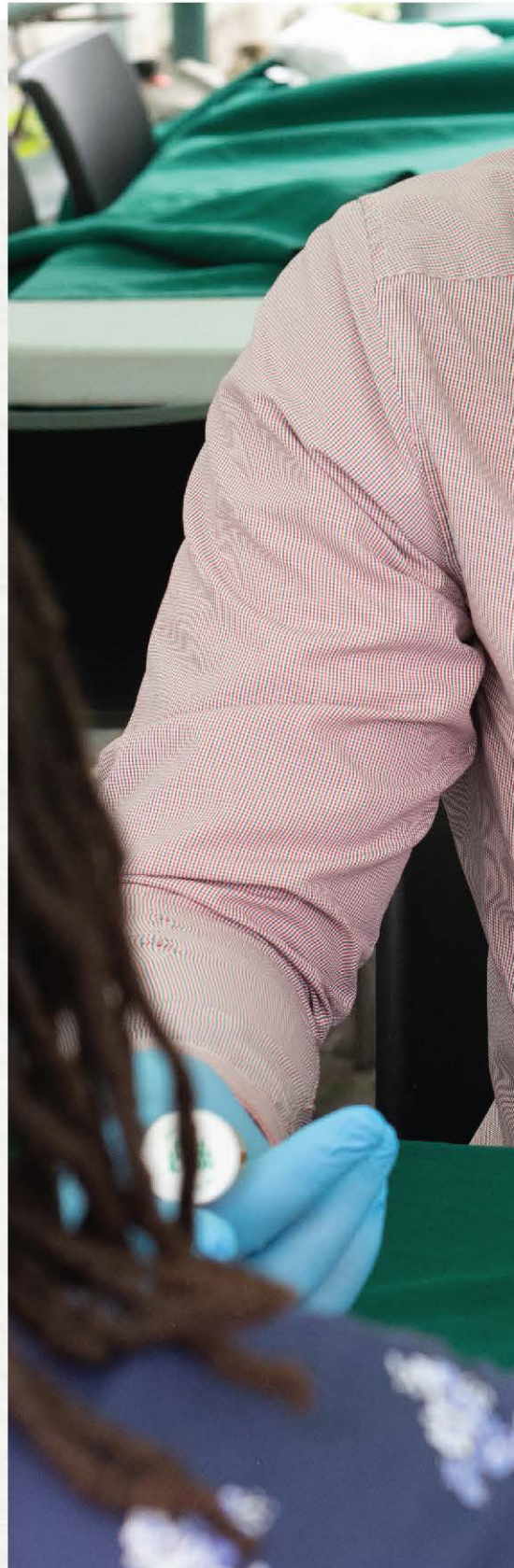
If we are out of stock of prescribed medication, the pharmacist stamp “not available” on said prescription. You have the option of purchasing the medication privately, and returning prescription and receipt to our Customer Service Department to make a claim for a reimbursement or use medications remaining at home then check our pharmacies to see if we received the item(s).

### **When do I speak to a pharmacist?**

Speak to a pharmacist, if you have a question about your prescription, such as; availability, or side-effects or any other matter relating to your prescription.

### **Does the Pharmacist offer consultation?**

Yes! You may consult with the pharmacist, particularly if newly diagnosed with a condition. No fee is charged for consulting the pharmacists.





## **What should I do if I experience side effects from my medication?**

If experiencing side effects, talk to your physician. Additionally, you can have a conversation with the pharmacist and express your concern/experience.

## **What if I don't want some of the drugs on my prescription?**

If there are medication(s) on your prescription that you do not want, just let the pharmacist know. If using our dropoff service, attach a note to the prescription before leaving it in the dropbox. When picking up, **check your medication bag before leaving the pharmacy.** Do not take away any medication you will not use; give it back to the pharmacist while you are still at the window.

## **What if you have asthma or epilepsy and have an emergency?**

In the instances when an asthmatic and epileptic patient is without medication and is in need of it. The prescription can be presented to the pharmacist, for urgent filling.

## **What are Special Authorized Drugs (SAD)?**

A SAD is requested by a physician on a SAD form on behalf of a named patient.

These medications may not be on MBS' formulary and thus may not be available through MBS. The physician's request, therefore, has to be evaluated by a SAD sub-committee. Sometimes, the request has to be reviewed by the Medical Benefits Board, before authorization is given, and MBS procures the medication on behalf of the beneficiary.

## Who can access a glucometer?

Glucometers are usually given to some persons with diabetes. An application form must be completed by the beneficiary's doctor and returned to MBS pharmacy.

- 1. The application form is reviewed to ensure that the information requested is provided, including: MBS number, telephone number, date of birth, and current medication(s).*
- 2. A beneficiary whose application is approved can collect a glucometer between the hours of 1pm and 3pm Mondays-Fridays at Nevis Street Pharmacy.*
- 3. The patient is issued the machine along with, labels, strips, and lancets, and a summary booklet explaining the features and trouble shooting.*

If there is an issue with the machine the Medical Benefits Scheme must be notified immediately.

In the instances where:

- 1. The machine is not working - beneficiaries will be asked to return it to the pharmacy for evaluation.*
- 2. The machine is lost or stolen - beneficiaries are required to write a letter to the Pharmacy Manager explaining the matter.*



## What is Brown Paper Bag Day?

On a few occasions throughout each year, we stage a "brown paper bag day", and invite the public to return any unused or expired medication for proper disposal. The public should not dispose of medications in garbage bins, or drains, as it can damage the ecosystem.

## Why do pharmacy hours change at year end?

For accounting purposes, we conduct a physical count of all stocks and enter the data into our computer system at year end (typically December 30th-31st) the last 5 days of the year. To compensate for this, we extend our hours of operation to ensure our beneficiaries are not without their medication. During this annual stock-taking exercise, beneficiaries can collect their medication, once the prescription was dropped off within the time advertised.

## Hurricane season and prescriptions

Keep all medications and other medical supplies such as glucometers (blood-sugar testing machines) and strips in one place. We also recommend that you keep all your medications in re-sealable plastic bags such as a Ziploc bag. Have at least one month's supply of medication on hand.

Do not wait until the last minute to replenish supplies. Have at least 1 pre-frozen ice pack to preserve your eye drops, insulin, and other injections. If ice packs are not available, have a flask full of ice on hand in case of a power outage. Asthmatic persons must ensure that they have full inhalers at their disposal. Your inhaler is full if the canister sinks to the bottom when placed into a full bowl of water.



# SAMPLE OF A VALID PRESCRIPTION



MEDICAL BENEFITS  
PRESCRIPTION  
Tel: 481-6200 / 4

Must have the registered beneficiary's name

PATIENT'S NAME: Jane Doe

Must have the registered beneficiary's MBS number

BENEFICIARY NO. 0123467A8 DOCTOR

*W. J. Forman* bel 50

Number of refills

Refill 4 Times

A valid prescription has:

- patient's name
- prescription date
- doctor's signature or stamp

A prescription is valid for not more than 6 months.

Attached duplicate when appropriate

Me  
wi  
to

ENEFITS

ATION

81-6367/8

№ 315001

DATE: 01 Jan 2022

Must have date prescribed

R: G. Health

Must have doctor's name

Amg 1 od 1/12

Duration of treatment

Medications prescribed with clear instructions for pharmacists.

r Physician

*Der*

Must have doctor's signature & stamp

Filled by

Date

**DOCTOR'S STAMP**

lying for claims



# MBS PHARMACY

## HOURS

Nevis Street  
Clare Hall  
All Saints  
Browne's Avenue

**Monday - Friday**  
**8:00am - 3:00pm**

Drop-off: 8:00am - 1:00pm  
Pick-up: 8:00am - 3:00pm

Gray's Farm

**Monday - Friday**  
**8:00am - 3:00pm**  
Walk-in/same day service

Bolans

**Monday - Friday**  
**8:00am - 12:00pm**  
Walk-in/same day service



Medical Benefits  
Scheme

**Medical Benefits Scheme**  
**Nevis Street, St. John's, Antigua.**

**Tel: 481-6413**

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