
BRINGING A PERSONAL SUPPLY OF MEDICINES INTO THE COOK ISLANDS

It's important for you to bring a supply of your usual medicines with you to last you for the entire time you're in the Cook Islands.

There are a large number of different medicines available in the Cook Islands, but we cannot guarantee that your particular medicine will be available here if you forget to bring it, if you lose it on the way or while you're here, or if you run out of it before you leave. So it's best to bring your own supply of your personal medicines with you.

In the Cook Islands, there are different rules for bringing in personal supplies of different types of medicines. For any medicine that's prescribed for you, you'll need to bring information to show that these medicines are for you to use while you're here. If you're not sure if you need to bring extra information, take this sheet and your medicines to your doctor or pharmacy well before travelling to the Cook Islands, so that you have time to get any extra information you might need.

Important Point

It is recommended that you bring your medicines and any related documentation in your carry-on luggage (unless prohibited by the airline), in case your suitcase doesn't arrive with you.

Non-Prescribed Medicines

Non-prescribed medicines are those that you've bought off the shelf at a pharmacy or supermarket. They include herbal medicines, dietary supplements, most cough and cold medicines (except those containing pseudoephedrine), and "over-the-counter" medicines like paracetamol (e.g. Panadol®), ibuprofen (e.g. Nurofen®), antihistamines (e.g. Claratyne®, etc), some medicines for indigestion (e.g. Gaviscon®, etc.), travel sickness medicines (e.g. Sea-Legs®, Scopoderm®, etc.), plus many others.

You don't need any extra documentation to bring a personal supply of non-prescribed medicines into the Cook Islands.

Prescribed Medicines

For medicines that have been prescribed for you, you should:

- Bring these medicines in their original containers provided by the pharmacy with the pharmacy dispensing label attached. The pharmacy dispensing label should be easily readable, as it contains important information that might be needed while you're here.
- Bring in your carry-on luggage, a letter from your prescriber that provides details on the medicines you're taking (the doses prescribed, and how often you're meant to take it), or a copy of the prescription for your medicines.
- Declare on your passenger arrival card, or tell a Customs Officer or a Health Protection Officer at Rarotonga Airport that you're bringing medicines with you if:
 - The quantity of one or more of your medicines is over 3 months' supply (or 1 month's supply for Controlled Drugs – see below), or
 - You are bringing someone else's medicines into the Cook Islands for them.

Controlled Drugs

(aka Schedule 8 Medicines in Australia)

In the Cook Islands, Controlled Drugs include:

- Medicinal cannabis
- Medicines for ADHD or similar, such as methylphenidate (e.g. Ritalin[®], Rubifen[®], etc) or dexamfetamine, or lisdexamfetamine (e.g. Vyvanse[®])
- Strong pain medicines, such as codeine, morphine, fentanyl, etc.
- Pseudoephedrine (including when in cough and cold medicines)

There are specific legal requirements to be met if you want to bring into the Cook Islands a personal supply of a Controlled Drug. To bring a Controlled Drug here, you must:

- Keep the Controlled Drug in the packaging in which it was dispensed from the pharmacy
- Ensure that the pharmacy dispensing label is on the packaging, and details are readable
- Only bring enough to last you for your stay based on the dose prescribed for you, but in any case no more than one month's supply
- Also bring a letter from your doctor that provides the following details:
 - Who the medicine has been prescribed for, and
 - The name of the medicine, and
 - The total amount prescribed by the Doctor, and
 - The dose of the medicine that was prescribed by the Doctor, and
 - The name of the Doctor who prescribed it for you, their practice address, and their Registration Number

Your Controlled Drugs will be detained at the border if any of the above conditions are not met, or if the Controlled Drug in your possession is not for you.

For more information

For more information or to check details for specific medicines, please email one of the following addresses:

- Te Marae Ora Help Desk: tmo.helpdesk@cookislands.gov.ck
- Te Marae Ora Hospital Pharmacy: tmo.hospitalpharmacy@cookislands.gov.ck