



**BUDGET
2025**

THE GROWTH BUDGET

Cost of Living

Hon Simeon Brown
Minister of Health

Hon David Seymour
Associate Minister of Health
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12-month prescriptions put money in patients' pockets

New Zealanders will soon be able to receive 12-month prescriptions for their medicines, delivering savings to patients on long-term medications, Health Minister Simeon Brown and Associate Health Minister David Seymour say.

“Currently, doctors and other prescribers can only prescribe most medicines for a maximum of three months at a time. Patients must then pay their GP for a follow-up appointment or to issue a repeat prescription every three months,” Mr Brown says.

“This creates unnecessary barriers for patients on stable, long-term medications like asthma inhalers, insulin for diabetes, and blood pressure tablets. It means added costs for patients and more paperwork for health professionals, taking time away from patients with more urgent or complex needs.

“From the first quarter of 2026, prescribers will be able to issue prescriptions for up to 12 months if it is clinically appropriate and safe to do so. While patients will still collect their medication from a pharmacy every three months, they will no longer need to return to their doctor for a new prescription each time.

“This change could save up to \$105 a year in GP fees for patients who need to renew their prescriptions four times annually. It’s a win-win for patients and the health system – fewer avoidable hospitalisations, better health outcomes, and reduced long term costs.”

Budget 2025 allocates \$91 million over four years to support this change. The funding will cover the cost of additional medicines, as more are expected to be dispensed.

“This change will remove red tape to make it easier for New Zealanders to get timely access to medicines so that they can live longer, happier, healthier lives,” Mr Seymour says.

“Requiring patients on stable, long-term medications to visit GPs four times a year to renew a prescription for 12 months only costs them money and reduces accessibility. A 12-month prescription in these cases is just common sense.

“I’m pleased to see the Government’s responsiveness to the voices of patients and their families by expanding access to more medicines for more groups. This decision reflects our commitment to a more adaptable and patient-centered approach.”

Mr Brown says this change will also help GPs and other health professionals better manage patients with long-term conditions.

“Instead of spending time on routine repeat prescriptions, they can focus more on supporting those with complex or deteriorating health needs,” Mr Brown says.

“It is a practical, patient-focused change that will make access to healthcare simpler, more affordable, and more efficient for New Zealanders.”