**ALLIANCE Live:**

**Advice from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society: how best to use your pharmacy during COVID-19**

**Featuring Jonathan Burton, Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Scotland**

**7 April 2020**

**Andrew Strong (the ALLIANCE):**

Welcome to ALLIANCE Live. This podcast was recorded during the COVID-19 crisis, when many people with long term conditions, disabled people and unpaid carers are isolated and the support they use remains under pressure.

For general advice on COVID-19 and its symptoms please visit [nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](file:///C:\Users\andrew.strong\Downloads\nhsinform.scot\coronavirus). This information is accurate at the date of recording (7 April 2020).

During this very difficult period the ALLIANCE is producing a series of podcasts for people living with long term conditions, disabled people, and unpaid carers. These will cover advice, support, and comment on COVID-19.

In this podcast we hear from Jonathan Burton, Chair of the Scottish Pharmacy Board and a community pharmacist in Stirling. Jonathan explains the role of pharmacists during the crisis and what you can expect from them over the coming weeks.

**Jonathan Burton:**

Hi everyone. My name’s Jonathan Burton. I’m a community pharmacist based in Stirling, in Scotland, and I’m also the Chair for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Scotland as well. I’m just going to take a few minutes today to speak to you guys about how best to use your pharmacy in these unprecedented and unusual times, as we deal with the COVID-19 virus.

Community pharmacists and their teams really are doing their very, very best during these difficult times to make sure that we all get the medicines that we need. So I’m going to read through a few tips that will enable you to help them to help you and your family as best as possible.

Firstly, please follow the Government advice. Do not visit a pharmacy if you or anyone in your household has a temperature, has a fever – that’s a temperature of above 37.8C – or a new, continuous cough. Even if the symptoms are quite mild, that’s really, really important. And plan ahead where possible. Pharmacies are working extremely hard to provide everyone with the prescriptions that they need. Please try to order your next prescription roughly a week before it’s due, and this will help the pharmacist deal with urgent requests and urgent queries. Remember, these urgent matters and urgent queries may involve you, your family, your loved ones, your friends – so please help us to make time for those. If you’re handing in your prescription, please put your contact details on the prescription, so the pharmacy can let you know when the prescription is ready, either by texting you or calling you on your phone. That means you won’t need to hang around in the pharmacy, you won’t need to wait there for very long. Pharmacies are very busy at the moment; there may be a restriction on how many people can be in the pharmacy at one time, and none of us want to be in a crowded place right now. Please don’t phone the pharmacy unless it really is very, very urgent, as our phone lines are extremely busy right now.

If you’re self-isolating, please ask family, friends, or neighbours to arrange to pick up your medication for you. If you don’t have anyone who can collect your medication then do speak to the pharmacy about advice on how they can help. Delivery services are really stretched at the moment, but we do want to make sure that everybody gets the medicines that they need. If you are well and you can visit the pharmacy yourself, think about how you can also help your family, your friends, and your neighbours who are self-isolating by maybe collecting their medications on their behalf. You might need to take ID with you, and you’ll need to know the name and address of the person or people you’re collecting for – that really helps the pharmacy staff. Don’t ask for extra medicines or increase the length of your prescription at this time – that can lead to medicine shortages. We have a good medicine supply chain in the UK, but it can’t cope with everybody asking for everything at the same time and asking for more. So please just order what you need, the normal quantities. Don’t stockpile medicines, because that really will start to cause problems for us all. We understand that at this time people might feel concerned or anxious about their health, and their medicines, and whether they can get their medicines or not, but if we all stick to the advice that I’ve just talked you through there, we have a much better chance of getting through this, and all having the medicines that we need, and feeling safe and secure that we have what we need to keep us healthy. Thanks very much for listening.

**Andrew Strong (the ALLIANCE):**

Thank you for listening. For general advice on COVID-19 and its symptoms please visit [nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](file:///C:\Users\andrew.strong\Downloads\nhsinform.scot\coronavirus). This information is accurate at the date of recording (7 April 2020).