

Pharmacists advise to get your essential medicines early and avoid the Christmas rush

- **17 December:** The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has advised that people plan ahead to make sure they have enough of any medications they may need over the Christmas period, both over the counter and prescription medicines. Community pharmacist and IPU President Eoghan Hanly advised that, “Every year pharmacies experience a rush of people anxious to ensure they have any medicines they need in the days leading up to Christmas. This year, as a result of social distancing requirements, wait periods in the pharmacy may be slightly longer. To avoid any difficulties, we encourage people to plan ahead and speak with their pharmacist well in advance of the Christmas rush, if at all possible. “We’d recommend taking the time this week to check your stocks of any regular medicines you take. If you will need to refill any of them over Christmas, contact your pharmacy now, ideally by email or phone, to arrange this. This will eliminate stress for you and help pharmacists during an exceptionally busy period.” Mr Hanly also reminded people that pharmacies will be available throughout the festive period, so while our message is to be prepared, there is no need to stockpile medicines; “Pharmacies will typically only close for a couple of days, so there is no need to stockpile medicines. This is completely unnecessary and could trigger drug shortages for others. Mr Hanly also reiterated the message that those with Covid-19 symptoms, or awaiting Covid-19 test results, should not attend the pharmacy in person; “Entering the pharmacy while waiting for a test result puts both pharmacy staff and other patients and customers at risk. We ask that instead people contact their local pharmacy if they need medicine and arrange for someone else to collect on their behalf. To ensure everyone enjoys a safe Christmas, we must be responsible and protect ourselves, and others. We are here to provide support and advice over the phone as well as in-person, so just contact us and we’ll work together to find a solution.”