

AOTS 8. OST and Holidays

If you get your scripts from AOTS

AOTS needs plenty of time to organise your script/s. Contact your key worker with the date/s of your travel and your destination -

- **4 weeks** before you go on holiday within NZ
- **6 weeks** at a minimum if you're going overseas
- **8 weeks** before you leave if you are travelling to more than one country

If you are in Shared Care with your GP

Tell your GP about your plans and let them know that your key worker can assist if necessary.

Contact your key worker to discuss your plans. They will liaise with you, your GP and pharmacist to assist you in planning your travel with opioid meds.

Staying in NZ

Depending on how long you're going to be away AOTS may transfer your script to a pharmacy at your holiday destination.

Four weeks' notice might seem like a long time but this is to allow for finding a suitable pharmacy and giving them time to order in OST meds.

Be aware that pharmacies around NZ do things differently. For example:

- Some regions use a different methadone formulation than we get in Auckland but even if it tastes and looks different (because it's got added colour and/or sugar) your dose will remain the same.
- Some pharmacies dilute methadone. Although your AOTS script will have 'do not dilute' on it, some pharmacists will dilute anyway. You can ask them not to but it's not worth getting into a hassle over. Your dose will be the same.

The pharmacist dispensing your methadone can't change your script without authorisation from an AOTS doctor. In an emergency you can contact your key worker or your local AOTS Team to see whether or not it's possible to make a change.

Take some ID with you. The advantage of using your drivers' license is that it has your photo on it whereas something like your community services card doesn't. Try to have photo ID wherever possible.

If you're in the stabilisation/restabilisation phases of treatment you might not be eligible for holiday prescriptions. Check with your key worker.

If it's a public holiday and you're staying in Auckland, check the opening hours of the pharmacy you attend. Some close early and some don't open at all. It's also handy to know the hours of the AOTS pharmacy.

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Travelling overseas

See *OST and You* p.36

Organising opioid substitution treatment (OST) for overseas travel can be difficult - trying to identify and contact overseas services can be a time consuming and bureaucratic exercise.



Some things to be aware of:

- Committing yourself financially to travelling before you've had confirmation that you're going to be able to continue your OST overseas isn't a good idea. Better safe than sorry – and broke!
- The more notice your key worker has the better. Your key worker needs time to help you make the necessary arrangements
- The more countries you're going to, the more notice is needed
- If you are travelling to more than one country, let your key worker know **8 weeks** before you plan to leave. Arrangements may need to be made with an OST service in the country/ countries you are visiting, or documentation for export and import of OST must be organised with the relevant authorities.

Please note: Overseas travel will not usually be arranged for people in the stabilisation and restabilisation phases of treatment

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