

Pharmacists continue to prefer personal consultation to online prescription orders

April 21, 2021:
Many consumers resorted to online prescription orders during the pandemic. Although this trend guaranteed safety and social distancing, some pharmacists continue to prefer the traditional path of one-on-one communication with their existing and new patients after the pandemic comes under control.

"One-on-one communication instills trust and better understanding of the patients' needs and health conditions. We often provide personalized counselling based on the patient's medical history before recommending

an OTC product," says Sanjay Patel, pharmacist, Apollo Pharmacy, "on the other hand, online orders are impersonal, and it may not work in favour of a patient with existing health conditions."

During the pandemic many proactive pharmacies introduced dedicated text messaging services to address the challenges of patients who needed personalized consultation before making a purchase from home. "We introduced a free messaging service to support those who were ordering their medications from home," says Amit Thakkar, pharmacist, Millennium Medical Centre and Pharmacy. "This service helped patients inquire about their medications through text messages, and remotely interact with us before purchasing. However meeting in person always ensures more accuracy" adds Amit. Apollo Pharmacy has similar views. "Text messages may prevent patients from making the wrong choices, but personal consultation is key to making the best choice," says Sanjay.

Many consumers found it challenging to adjust with this new trend of ordering their medications online.



"Like all others individuals, I isolated myself during the pandemic, but I urgently needed an OTC medication for a mild stomach infection," says a patient, 65, name withheld to ensure anonymity. "I could not identify the

suitable medication, so I had to call the pharmacy for personalized advice. Online ordering is not convenient for individuals who need consultation," he adds.

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