

# NEUE APOTHEKEN ILLUSTRIERTE

HERAUSGEBER: ABDA – BUNDESVEREINIGUNG DEUTSCHER APOTHEKERVERBÄNDE



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## How to Get Medicines in Germany?

**The German government has always attached great importance to ensuring that its population is well provided for. This applies, in particular, to health issues: Everyone is allowed to consult a medical practitioner or be treated in a hospital and receives all necessary medicines and aids in a pharmacy. In order to ensure that everything goes smoothly and remains affordable, health care is closely regulated by law. Some of the legal provisions are different from those applied in other countries.**

- If you feel sick, you normally first go to a general practitioner of your own choice. In nearly every town, there are several general practitioners.
- In case of acute illness occurring on a weekend or at night, a practitioner will be available on the phone number: 116 117.
- In case of acute life-threatening situations, i. e. in case of an emergency, you directly dial: 112. Then, an ambulance will come and take you to a hospital emergency department. Otherwise, you usually only go to a hospital when referred by a doctor in case you need a special treatment or an operation.
- A thorough medical examination is carried out by the doctor to determine what the patient needs. Then he proposes a treatment that is perfectly suited to the patient's condition. In many cases, the doctor will prescribe medicines. On the Rezept (prescription), the doctor notes the name and package size of the required medication and sometimes adds some

information regarding its administration. Either the patient or a relative then takes this document to a pharmacy, which can also be found in almost every town in Germany. You will recognize pharmacies by the typical red A-shaped logo installed outside the shop.

- Pharmacies have most of the important medicines on stock. Any articles that are not on stock may be ordered within a short period of time. The pharmacy's employees give you the medicines, the doctor has prescribed on the prescription. In most cases, the patient will have to pay only a small contribution. The rest of the costs of the medicine will generally be borne by the patient's health insurance or the social welfare office (Sozialamt). This applies to all prescription – only medicines that are available on a medical prescription only. Under certain circumstances, you may be exempted from the personal contribution to the costs.
- You can buy all non-prescription drugs, including many preparations against mild health problems, like colds or mild gastro-intestinal problems, over the counter at any pharmacy without presenting a prescription and without having seen a doctor. However, you will have to pay the full price of non-prescription preparations yourself. In addition, pharmacists and their employees provide comprehensive advice on medicinal products – at no cost to the patient. The staff is very qualified and able to answer all questions regarding the proper administration, the effects and possible secondary effects or interactions of the medicinal preparations.