



### 3 Pharmacies

While medicines are used to cure sickness, their intake requires much precaution since they are often accompanied by side effects. This part introduces prescription medicines, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and how to use them.

#### 3-1 The differences between a pharmacy (yakkyoku), prescription pharmacy (chozai yakkyoku) and drugstore (yakuten)

In Japan, medicine can be purchased at pharmacy (yakkyoku), prescription pharmacy (chozai yakkyoku) and drugstore (yakuten). The differences between these are explained below.

<b>pharmacy (yakkyoku)</b>	This type of store sells general medicines.
<b>prescription pharmacy (chozai yakkyoku)</b>	This type of store sells general medicines and can prepare medicines prescribed by doctors.
<b>drugstore (yakuten)</b>	This type of store sells general medicines as well as sanitary products and daily necessities (washing powder and so on), cosmetics, etc.

#### 3-2 Purchasing medicines

When you experience mild sickness that does not apparently require a doctor's attention, you can buy generic medicines to alleviate headache, symptoms of colds and stomach problems. OTC medicines are not covered by health insurance and their prices must be fully borne by purchasers.

To have your prescribed medicines prepared, you go to a prescription pharmacy (chozai yakkyoku). In this case, if you belong to a health insurance program, you only pay part of the medicine price, while the program covers the rest. However, unless otherwise specified, the effective period of a prescription is four days including the day of handover to the patient. When the effective period lapses, you have to undergo a clinical session to have the prescription issued again. Even if you have had a medicine prescribed in the past, you have to undergo a clinical session to get the prescription again, once you need to buy the medicine anew.

#### 3-3 Usage of medicines

At a pharmacy and drugstore, a pharmacist explains to you about how to take the medicines, notes for intake, possible side effects, etc. No interpreter is available at those places and if necessary, you must be accompanied by someone who understands Japanese. Explanatory notes attached to the medicine are written only in Japanese. If you do not understand, please have someone translate them for you.