

# Medicines & Poisons Information Sheet

## Supplying medicines without a prescription

Pharmacists in the NT can supply a Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 substance without a prescription to a person (the patient), or another person who acts for the patient (the agent) providing they meet certain requirements. The three circumstances permitted in the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Act 2012* (MPTGA) are:

### 1) Supplying an unrestricted Schedule 4 substance in an emergency

Where the pharmacist has verified the substance has previously been prescribed and supplied to the patient AND is reasonably satisfied supplying the substance is justified because of urgent circumstances.

### 2) Supplying from a verbal request

An authorised prescriber may verbally request the pharmacist to supply a medicine to a person. In these circumstances the pharmacist must be satisfied that the person making the request is an authorised prescriber AND the request is for the supply of the substance to the person to administer to themselves or someone else.

Under Section 97 of MPTGA, if an authorised prescriber gives a verbal request for supply then they must give the pharmacist a prescription for this supply within 7 days.

If the pharmacist does not receive a prescription for this supply within 7 days, the pharmacist must give a written report to Medicines and Poisons.

### Quantity of Schedule 4 substances permitted to be supplied without a prescription

The pharmacist must not supply more than seven (7) days supply of the substance administered at the daily dose the pharmacist reasonably believes the authorised prescriber would recommend be administered to the patient.

For multi-dose packages (eg inhalers, liquids, creams) the pharmacist may supply the smallest primary pack of the substance that has been packaged and labelled by the substance's manufacturer.

**The Medicines supplied by the above pathways are not subsidised under the PBS.**

### 3) Continued dispensing of eligible prescribed medicines by pharmacists

The Continued Dispensing initiative is a PBS arrangement that allows the supply of an eligible medicine to a person by an approved pharmacist where there is an immediate need for the medicine but where it is not practical to obtain a valid PBS prescription. Supply under these arrangements is subject to a strict set of professional guidelines. Only one supply of a medicine can be provided under Continued Dispensing within a twelve (12) month period.

The MPTGA permits the supply of unrestricted Schedule 4 medicines under this arrangement, so pharmacists working at PBS approved premises can assist patients using this initiative.

The list of medicines currently available under Continued Dispensing arrangements can be found on the Services Australia website<sup>1</sup>.

1. <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/continued-dispensing-pbs-medicines-for-pharmacists?context=22861>

## Can a pharmacist supply a Schedule 8 without a prescription?

Yes; **only on the verbal request** of an authorised prescriber.

The supply must be made in accordance with the requirements for supply under a verbal order as above.

## Best practice recommendations

For continuity of care and best practice, a pharmacist involved in supplying any medication without a prescription should consider:

- communicating the emergency supply to the patient's regular prescriber.
- including the words \*emergency supply\* (or similar) on the label of dispensed medication
- recording the reason for the supply on the patients profile.

If patients frequently require supply without a prescription the pharmacist needs to identify the cause of the prescription management issue. Alternative options to the above methods of supplying without a prescription can be discussed with patient and usual prescriber such as telehealth consultations or electronic prescriptions.

For further information please contact:

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