Information for patients on S8 medication

The *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2012* aims to promote and protect public safety by monitoring and controlling the supply of Schedule 8 (S8) substances. Please note that prescriptions for S8 substances written in other states are not valid in the NT. The prescriber must be practising in the NT, as evidenced by the practice address on the prescriptions.

On occasion, S8 prescribing may be referred by the Chief Health Officer to the Scheduled Substances Clinical Advisory Committee or Health Practitioner Boards.

UNRESTRICTED S8 MEDICINES

These medications include:

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| * Codeine (except when combined with paracetamol or ibuprofen) | * buprenorphine (except SubutexR, SuboxoneR, BuvidalR, SublocadeR) |
| * flunitrazepam | * fentanyl |
| * ketamine | * hydromorphone |
| * methadone tablets | * morphine |
| * pentazocine | * oxycodone |
| * pethidine | * alprazolam |

Some S8 medicines will only be prescribed by specialists or when a patient is in hospital.

Your doctor, or nurse practitioner, (i.e. your prescriber) can only prescribe these medicines for a limited number of patients. This is to ensure that patients with pain problems receive effective treatment, including referrals to other services that may be helpful in rehabilitation of pain. Patients with problems other than chronic or acute pain may be assessed and referred for appropriate treatment.

Your prescriber also has to notify Medicines & Poisons Control of each patient that she/he prescribes S8 medicines for if the treatment lasts longer than eight weeks or if high doses of the S8 medicine are prescribed.

Your pharmacist can dispense S8 medicines to you in accordance with your prescriber’s prescription, but may need to contact the prescriber if there are concerns regarding the medicine or patient condition.

Prescriptions are valid for SIX months, but only one month’s worth of medicine can be dispensed to you at any one time. This is the case for both PBS and private prescriptions. No repeats are allowed on a private prescription.

The interval between supplies must be written on each prescription

You should only see one prescriber for S8 medicines. It is recommended that you have your medicines dispensed by one pharmacy if possible. If you have issues with dependence, your prescriber can refer you to a specialist agency that will discuss alternative treatments with you.

RESTRICTED S8 STIMULANT MEDICINES

This group of medicines includes dexamfetamine, methylphenidate and lisdexamfetamine (RitalinR, ArtigeR, ConcertaR and VyvanseR etc.) These medicines are used to treat narcolepsy, autosomal hypersomnolence and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Your prescriber needs to be a specialist paediatrician (for children up to 18 years of age) or a psychiatrist, neurologist, physician or a doctor in training in these specialist fields.

Doctors and nurse practitioners can co-prescribe with one of the above specialists with a compulsory review every two years. Your prescriber can only prescribe these medications to a limited number of patients and has to obtain a special Authorisation to prescribe for each patient.

Your pharmacist can dispense stimulant medicines to you according to your prescriber’s prescription.

Stimulant prescriptions are valid for SIX months, but only one month’s worth of medication can be dispensed at any one time (special arrangements are in place for patients who need dexamfetamine compounded into a sustained release form).

The interval between supplies must be written on each prescription.

If you receive stimulant medicine from a general practitioner and your specialist is based interstate, the review consultation can occur by video-conference (telehealth). Your doctor will arrange this for you.

RESTRICTED S8 MEDICINES BUPRENORPHINE AND METHADONE

These medicines include methadone liquid 5mg/mL, SubutexR sublingual tablets, SuboxoneR sublingual films, and buprenorphine depot injection (BuvidalR or SublocadeR) for treatment of opioid dependence.

Your prescriber needs to obtain an authorisation prior to prescribing for each patient.

An agreement between the patient and the prescriber has to be signed to specify the medication, dosage and the dispensing pharmacy. The agreement also contains a code of behaviour that a patient has to adhere to during the program. A current photograph of the patient forms part of the application for authorisation. This photograph is provided to the dispensing pharmacy.

Takeaway doses are only allowed by prior arrangement with your prescriber. Takeaway doses may be allowed for patients who are stable on a program and have reduced or stopped using illicit drugs.

Your pharmacist will dispense the medication to you on a daily basis or as specified by your prescriber.

Your pharmacist is only allowed to dose patients who have valid prescriptions. Dispensing of these medicines must commence within three days from the prescribing or starting date that is written on the prescription.

You will need to attend your prescriber appointments regularly so the pharmacy always has a current prescription for you. Your pharmacist is not allowed to dose without a valid prescription.

Your pharmacist is also not allowed to dose a patient who is intoxicated, on alcohol or other drugs.

Misuse or diversion of the medicine will result in termination from the program.

For 24-hour information on alcohol & other drug issues, referral advice or counselling contact Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) NT on phone: 1800 131 35

## For further information, please contact:

## **Medicines & Poisons Control**

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