

Working with medicines

# Dental Professionals

## Regulations

Dentists and other dental professionals, registered with the national board, have various authorities under the Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016 to purchase, hold and use prescription medicines.

## Authority

The following table outlines dental professionals with authority to use medicines under the Regulations:

| **Practitioner** | **Type of Authority** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Obtain (purchase)** | **Possess** | **Administer** | **Supply** | **Prescribe** |
| Dentist | 🗸 | 🗸 | 🗸 | 🗸 | 🗸 |
| Dental therapist,  Dental hygienist,  Oral health therapist |  | 🗸 | 🗸  under direction of a dentist |  |  |

Authority is limited to the lawful practice of the professional and includes:

* for dental practice only;
* within scope of practice / general professional limitations;
* for patients under the care of the health practitioner;
* at usual place of business;
* in the course of operating the business / as part of employment; and
* any relevant restrictions or conditions imposed on the individual practitioner.

Scope of practice for dental professionals is defined by the Dental Board of Australia.

## Purchasing medicines

Dentists may purchase medicines in their own name, for the treatment of patients under their care. A Permit is required to purchase medicines in name of a business, or where inventory will be shared between multiple dentists for use at the one practice.

## Supply and prescription

Dentists may personally prescribe or supply a Schedule 4 (S4) or Schedule 8 (S8) medicine in accordance with their authority. Any medicine supplied must be appropriately packaged and fully labelled according to regulations.

Dentists may prescribe up to 14 days supply of S8 medicines for acute dental treatment, when in accordance with the *Schedule 8 Medicines Prescribing Code*. All other S8 prescribing requires prior written authorisation from the Department of Health. Dentists should be aware of the obligations of prescribers in relation to drug dependent and oversupplied persons.

Other dental professionals may administer a S4 or S8 medicine on the personal direction of a dentist. Direction may be written or verbal, and provided through electronic or telephone means. Records of any direction must be maintained in accordance with the Regulations.

## Storage

Schedule 4 medicines must be stored in a locked storage facility to prevent unauthorised access. For example: a lockable room, cupboard, cabinet or refrigerator. Precautions must be taken to ensure keys are not accessible to unauthorised staff.

Schedule 8 medicines must be stored in a locked purpose-built drug safe. Storage of a total of S8 medicines less than of 250 doses requires a small safe and greater than 500 doses requires a large safe. Motion detectors covering the safe are required when more than 250 doses are stored.

## Recording

Dental professionals must make accurate clinical records of all medicines administered or supplied and retain these for at least 2 years for S4 medicines, or 5 years for S8 medicines. All records must be available to be produced if demanded by an authorised officer of the Department of Health.

A register of transactions, kept in an approved manner and form, must be maintained for all incoming and outgoing S8 medicines. A monthly inventory must be also performed.

When S8 medicines are supplied (as distinct from being administered), a summary of records of S8 medicines supplied for the month must be forwarded to the Department of Health, before the seventh day of the following month.

## Compliance assessment

Dental practices and dental professionals may be required to participate in routine audit assessments to monitor compliance with these requirements. Non-compliance with the Regulations may result in regulatory actions such as restrictions or loss of medicines authorities, notification to the Dental Board of Australia, and/or prosecution under the legislation.

## More information

For more information contact the Medicines and Poisons Regulation Branch on:

* (08) 9222 6883 (Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm)
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