

# Pharmacist Administration of Long-Acting Injectable Buprenorphine

This factsheet provides information for pharmacists about the role of pharmacists in the administration of long-acting injectable buprenorphine (LAI BPN) in Queensland.

This factsheet **does not** describe Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) rules, processes or requirements regarding the provision of opioid dependence treatment.

For information on PBS rules and requirements, visit [www.pbs.gov.au/browse/section100](http://www.pbs.gov.au/browse/section100)

## Key Information

- Long-acting injectable buprenorphine (LAI BPN) is currently the recommended treatment for opioid dependence. This is due to the improved safety profile, regimen simplicity, and greater convenience for patients compared to alternative treatments.
- LAI BPN can be prescribed as part of the Queensland Opioid Treatment Program (QOTP) which provides treatment for opioid dependence. Opioids prescribed under the QOTP are referred to as 'approved opioids'.
- Pharmacists play a key role in the delivery of the QOTP through dispensing and administration of approved opioids. Pharmacists are authorised under [Schedule 9, Part 1, Division 1](#) of the Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021 (MPMR) to dispense and administer approved opioids, including LAI BPN, on the prescription of an authorised prescriber.
- All LAI BPN prescriptions must be dispensed before LAI BPN can be administered to the patient.
- Pharmacists' administering LAI BPN should be familiar with formulation specific information and be competent in administration of injectable medications.
- Administration of LAI BPN by pharmacists will require collaboration with the approved QOTP prescriber. The prescription should **clearly indicate the name of the pharmacy where the LAI BPN is to be administered thereby indicating the prescriber's intention for the pharmacist to administer the LAI BPN.**
- Pharmacists should ensure that appropriate clinical records are kept in relation to both the dispensing and administration of the LAI BPN.

# Prescriptions for Pharmacist Administration

- Prescriptions for QOTP medication must be compliant with both [Chapter 4, Part 6, Division 3](#) and [Chapter 4, Part 6, Division 4](#) of the MPMR as prescriptions for both dispensing (supply) and administration. See the [Queensland Health Writing Lawful Prescriptions factsheet](#) for more information about the requirements for prescriptions in Queensland.

Prescriptions for administration of LAI BPN by a pharmacist must (in addition to the requirements above):

- state the name of the place where the LAI BPN is to be administered
- state the prescriber's QOTP prescribing approval number (this is in addition to their PBS prescriber number)
- include instructions for how the dose is to be administered
- include the start and end dates for when the dose is to be administered.

## Administration of LAI BPN by Pharmacists

- Pharmacists are required to check QScript prior to dispensing LAI BPN (unless an exemption under Schedule 18, Part 1A of the MPMR applies) and must comply with Queensland Health's [Monitored Medicines Standard](#).
- For more information about QScript, visit: [www.health.qld.gov.au/qscript/](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qscript/).
- Pharmacists administering LAI BPN must first dispense the medicine before administering the dispensed LAI BPN to the patient. If there is a delay between dispensing and administering the medication, pharmacists may consider re-checking QScript at the time of administration to inform the safe treatment of the patient.
- Pharmacists administering LAI BPN should be familiar with formulation specific information and be competent in administration of injectable medications. Training resources are listed in supporting documents below including the [Australasian College of Pharmacy long acting injectable buprenorphine course](#) and the [Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Long-acting injectable buprenorphine \(LAIB\) administration by pharmacists online module](#).
- All health practitioners dispensing LAI BPN (other than those practising in public sector hospitals) must make their LAI BPN dispensing records in dispensing software connected to a Prescription Exchange Service (PES) to ensure these records are uploaded into QScript in real-time.
- The pharmacist should complete a quality and safety check prior to administering the LAI BPN medication, which must include:
  - a current prescription for QOTP medication with clear medication orders
  - correct patient
  - signs of intoxication
  - correct day or time since previous administration

- correct QOTP medication and dose
- correct route of administration including location of subcutaneous injection.
- Pharmacists should ensure that appropriate clinical records are kept in relation to the administration of the LAI BPN including details of the administration site.
- For further information regarding the administration of LAI BPN see the relevant product information document below:
  - [Buvidal® Weekly product information AUS](#)
  - [Buvidal® Monthly product information AUS](#)
  - [Sublocade® product information AUS](#)

## Safety Considerations

- In accordance with Queensland Health's [Monitored Medicines Standard](#), pharmacists who hold significant concerns about the clinical appropriateness of dispensing a monitored medicine for a QOTP patient must attempt to communicate with the prescriber about their concerns prior to deciding whether to dispense. View the [Monitored Medicines Standard](#) for full details of these requirements.
- The pharmacist should ensure medication is dispensed and administered in accordance with the prescription, unless there are safety concerns (e.g., intoxication, routinely missing medication). If safety concerns are identified, medication **should not** be dispensed or administered, and concerns should be communicated to the prescriber.
- Patients who attend after 9 days from their last Buvidal® Weekly injection or more than 35 days from the last Buvidal® Monthly or more than 42 days from their last Sublocade® injection should be assessed for withdrawal symptoms and non-prescribed opioid use. The patient's presentation and pharmacist's assessment should be discussed with the QOTP prescriber for consideration. The patient should be directed to present to the prescriber for follow-up if there are any clinical concerns.

If the pharmacist is dispensing LAI BPN on a prescription from an approved prescriber but not administering, the LAI BPN must be provided directly to the prescriber or a surgery/clinic staff member nominated by the prescriber. LAI BPN medication is never provided directly to the patient.

## Supporting documents and resources

[Queensland Opioid Dependence Treatment Guidelines 2023](#)

[Writing Lawful Prescriptions | Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 \(health.qld.gov.au\)](#)

Further information about QScript is available at [www.health.qld.gov.au/qscript](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/qscript)

Tips for administration of LAI BPN are available on the Insight website at [Insight - Insight - How to administer Long Acting Injectable Buprenorphine](#)

Australasian College of Pharmacy [Long-acting injectable buprenorphine course](#)

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia [Long-acting injectable buprenorphine \(LAIB\) administration by pharmacists online module](#)

## Contacts:

For more information visit [Queensland Opioid Treatment Program | Queensland Health.](#)

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