Medicines and Poisons Act 2019

Factsheet – current as at September 2021

Categories of medicines and dealings

What is a medicine?

Under the *Medicines and Poisons Act 2019* (**MPA**), a **medicine** is a substance to which the following schedules in the Poisons Standard[1], applies:

- schedule 2 (an **S2 medicine**)
- schedule 3 (an **S3 medicine**)
- schedule 4 (an **S4 medicine**)
- schedule 8 (an **S8 medicine**)

A regulation under the MPA may also prescribe another substance to be an S2, S3, S4 or S8 medicine.

What are the categories of medicines?

The *Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Regulation 2021* (**MPMR**) lists some medicines into specific categories, which have further requirements about their use. The list of which medicines are in each category can be found in Schedule 2 of the MPMR.

Restricted medicines

These medicines are limited to certain specialist practitioners to deal with due to therapeutic risks associated with their use. They include medicines such as clomiphene, isotretinoin, thalidomide.

High-risk medicines

These medicines cannot be self-prescribed. A prescriber who requires these medicines for their own therapeutic use, must ensure another prescriber has prescribed the medicine for them.

[1] the current Poisons Standard within the meaning of the Therapeutic Goods Act 1989 (Cwlth), section 52A(1)

Diversion-risk medicines

Due to the risks associated with these medicines if they are diverted for uses other than their intended purpose, such as for illicit use which may result in serious harm to human health, there are additional controls in the MPA and MPMR to limit the risk of such diversion.

Monitored medicines

Monitored medicines are schedule 8 medicines and other prescription-only medicines associated with abuse and drug-seeking such as sedatives, sleeping tablets and products that combine codeine with other medicines. Prior to prescribing or supplying these medicines, prescribers and dispensers will be required to check a database to see if a person has previously been prescribed or supplied a monitored medicine. The prescribing and dispensing of these medicines must be in accordance with the Monitored Medicine Standard. Please refer to other relevant factsheets on these medicines.

What are dealings?

A person is required to be authorised under the MPA if they **deal** with a medicine.

A person **deals** with a medicine if the person does any of the following activities—

- manufactures the medicine;
- buys the medicine;
- possesses the medicine;
- supplies the medicine;
- administers the medicine;
- prescribes or makes a standing order for the medicine;
- disposes of waste from a diversion-risk medicine;
- asks or directs another person to do something mentioned in any of the above

When dealing with a medicine, a person must do so in the authorised way. Failure to do so without a reasonable excuse will likely constitute an offence under the MPA. Please refer to other facts sheets about how a person can be authorised under the MPA, and what obligations they have for each dealing.

Associated guidance documents

- Overview of the medicines framework – factsheet
- Authorisations and activities – factsheet

Further information

For further information, contact the Healthcare Approvals and Regulation Unit:

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