

## Prescribing and Supply of Medicinal Cannabis

This information is for prescribers and pharmacists involved in the prescribing and supply of medicinal cannabis in the ACT and should be read in conjunction with the [ACT Controlled Medicines Prescribing Standards](#).

Category 6 – Medicinal Cannabis within the ACT Controlled Medicines Prescribing Standards allow prescribers to apply for approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis by category, and describes conditions and criteria for seeking approval.

### Medicinal Cannabis is a controlled medicine in the ACT

Cannabis products can be prescribed as schedule 8 ‘controlled’ medicines in the ACT when they are intended for medicinal use and are either:

- manufactured in Australia in accordance with the Commonwealth Department of Health regulations; or
- imported in accordance with a valid customs import license issued by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

People cannot legally cultivate their own cannabis for medicinal use. Possession and supply of all other non-approved cannabis, whether for medicinal or recreational use, remains illegal in the ACT.

Medicinal cannabis preparations that contain THC (tetrahydrocannabinol – the main psychoactive substance in cannabis) may cause a positive road drug test for cannabis. It is currently an offence to drive with THC in a person’s oral fluid or blood. There is no legislative dispensation or defence for the use of medicinal cannabis which leads to a positive road drug test.

### ACT Medicinal Cannabis Category Approvals

Prescribers can apply for ACT Chief Health Officer approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis in the ACT, in accordance with *Category 6 – Medicinal Cannabis* of the ACT Controlled Medicine Prescribing Standards. Applications may be approved for the following conditions:

- Spasticity in multiple sclerosis.
- Nausea and vomiting related to cancer chemotherapy.
- Pain and/or anxiety in patients with active malignancy of a life limiting disease where (in either case) the prognosis might reasonably be expected to be 12 months or less.
- Refractory paediatric epilepsy.

Applications will also be considered for other medical conditions and may be referred to the ACT Medicinal Cannabis Medical Advisory Panel for advice.

NB: Cannabidiol (when containing no more than 2% of other cannabinoids) is a schedule 4 medicine, and as such no ACT Health authorisation is required.



## Commonwealth TGA Special Access Scheme approvals

Prescribers wishing to prescribe medicinal cannabis also need to obtain Commonwealth Special Access Scheme (SAS) approval from the TGA.

From February 2019, ACT prescribers may apply for both ACT and TGA approvals concurrently through the TGA's single online application form. This consolidated form has been developed to streamline the application process for prescribers and facilitate more timely patient access to medicinal cannabis products. The TGA and ACT Health will each conduct their own evaluation processes on the information submitted via the online application system.

## Supply of Medicinal Cannabis

Pharmacists who receive a prescription for the supply of medicinal cannabis should contact the prescriber to discuss arrangements for obtaining medicinal cannabis for the patient.

Pharmacists may need to apply to the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Office of Drug Control to seek approval to obtain medicinal cannabis.

Some medicinal cannabis products require refrigeration, which poses issues with safe storage. Please contact the Health Protection Service on (02) 5124 9442 to discuss arrangements for safe storage if a patient wishes to access a refrigerated product.

## Further Information

For further information, please visit [www.health.act.gov.au/pharmaceuticalservices](http://www.health.act.gov.au/pharmaceuticalservices) or contact the Pharmaceutical Services Section of the Health Protection Service on (02) 5124 944.

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