

Guidance for Prescribers Specified Drugs



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
Public Health

What are 'specified drugs'?

Schedule 4 (prescription only) medicines may be declared to be 'specified drugs' by being included in an Order issued by the Governor of Western Australia under Section 22A of the *Poisons Act 1964*. 'Specified drugs' are controlled by both the *Poisons Act 1964* and the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1981*.

'Specified drugs' may be subject to misuse, including diversion for the manufacture of illicit drugs. Unlike Schedule 8 medicines, 'specified drugs' do not fully meet the criteria of 'drugs of addiction'. The use of many 'specified drugs' is restricted by sporting authorities.

What medicines are currently listed as 'specified drugs'?

The current Order, including the full list of 'specified drugs' can be found in the WA Government Gazette of 14 September 2001 (with an amendment Order published on 13 August 2002). The WA Government Gazette is available on the State Law Publisher website at <http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/gazette/gazette.nsf>.

There are two groups of 'specified drugs'. Division 1 includes barbiturates, dextropropoxyphene (included in DiGesic[®], Doxolene[®], Capadex[®] and Paradex[®]), anorectics (including phentermine), ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, erythropoietins and darbepoetin as well as diazepam injection. Division 2 includes anabolic steroids and similar androgenic substances such as prasterone (dehydroepiandrosterone, DHEA) as well as human growth hormone.

What is the effect of 'specified drugs' being controlled by the *Misuse of Drugs Act 1981*?

It is an offence for a person to be in possession of a 'specified drug' unless the drug has been prescribed for them or the person is authorised, under the *Poisons Act 1964*, to have the 'specified drug' for the purposes of their profession or their employment.

The *Misuse of Drugs Act 1981* is administered by the WA Police. Ensuring that all Schedule 4 medicines supplied to patients are correctly labelled makes it easier to ascertain that the person is legitimately in possession of a 'specified drug'.

What do prescribers (including medical practitioners, dentists, nurse practitioners and veterinary surgeons) need to know about 'specified drugs'?

- **Prescribers cannot prescribe 'specified drugs' for themselves** (Section 36 of the *Poisons Act 1964*). This restriction also applies to Schedule 8 medicines.
- Pharmaceutical representatives cannot supply prescribers with samples of 'specified drugs' (Poisons Regulation 8A).
- If a prescriber supplies a quantity of a Schedule 4 medicine, including a 'specified drug', to a patient, it must be fully labelled in accordance with the *Poisons Regulations 1965* (Regulation 21). The label must include: the words 'Keep out of reach of children', the name, strength and quantity of the Schedule 4 medicine, instructions for use, the name of the patient (and the owner's surname for veterinary medicines), an identification number which corresponds to the entry in the patient's record, the date of supply and the name and address of the surgery from where the medicine was supplied.



Delivering a Healthy WA

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