Pharmaceutical Services Branch information bulletin
Prescribing by endorsed midwives and podiatrists
Schedule 8 prescribing for nurse practitioners

Who should read this information?
The information in this bulletin is primarily intended for pharmacists. Other registered health practitioners may also find it useful.

What are the changes to the Poisons Regulations 1965?
The Poisons Regulations 1965 have been updated to allow:

- **Endorsed podiatrists** to prescribe medicines included on Podiatry Board of Australia’s National Podiatry Scheduled Medicines List.
  
  All podiatrists may now purchase and use local anaesthetics when treating their patients.

- **Endorsed midwives** to prescribe Schedule 4 and Schedule 8 medicines included on the Prescribing Formulary for Eligible Midwives with a Scheduled Medicines Endorsement published by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.
  
  Endorsed midwives may administer doses of Schedule 8 medicines to patients under their care but not write prescriptions for ongoing use.

- **Nurse practitioners** to prescribe Schedule 8 medicines, provided those medicines are included on their personal clinical practice guidelines (issued under Regulation 11A).

Which poisons regulations are relevant?
The main section which deals with the various endorsed health practitioners is Part 2A. Regulations 3C, 3D and 3E are about endorsed midwives and Regulations 3F, 3G and 3H are about endorsed podiatrists.

How will I know if the prescription is legal and can be dispensed?
The information required to be included on prescriptions written by endorsed podiatrists, endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners is the same as is generally required for a prescription written by a medical practitioner.

Endorsed podiatrists must also include the words ‘For podiatric treatment only’.

The onus is on the prescriber to comply with the restrictions on their prescribing afforded by the Poisons legislation or their registration endorsement. However, if you wish to check whether a midwife or podiatrist is eligible to prescribe, you can check whether the health practitioner is ‘endorsed for scheduled medicines’ on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) website.

The National Podiatry Scheduled Medicines List and the Prescribing Formulary for Eligible Midwives are also both available via the AHPRA website. Please note that medicines designated as ‘midwife’ items on...
the Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) are not equivalent to those included on the Prescribing Formulary for Eligible Midwives.

Both endorsed midwives and endorsed podiatrists are restricted to prescribing in compliance with all aspects of their respective medicines lists including indication, dose, route of administration, duration of therapy and any special restrictions such as shared care arrangements.

**Are there any special requirements for Schedule 8 prescriptions written by these health practitioners?**

Only endorsed podiatrists who are also registered as a podiatric surgeon are eligible to prescribe a Schedule 8 medicine and they are limited to prescribing a maximum of 7 days supply.

Nurse practitioners can only prescribe Schedule 8 medicines which are included on their personal clinical practice guidelines.

Endorsed midwives cannot write prescriptions for Schedule 8 medicines. They can initiate administration of doses of Schedule 8 medicines to their own patients, without any requirement to seek the approval of another health practitioner.

Pharmacists are required to either recognise the handwriting of the prescriber or contact the purported prescriber to verify the Schedule 8 prescription prior to dispensing (Regulation 53A). This requirement applies equally to all Schedule 8 prescriptions, regardless of the prescriber.

If a pharmacist cannot verify a Schedule 8 prescription, they can supply up to 2 days treatment to the patient. This ensures a legitimate patient can commence therapy.

**What should I do if I have concerns about a prescription written by a podiatrist, midwife or nurse practitioner?**

If you are unsure whether the particular group of health practitioners is eligible to write a prescription for a particular medicine, you can check:


If you detect a forged prescription, you should follow standard procedure and report the forgery initially to the WA Police and also to the Pharmaceutical Services Branch (see Pharmaceutical Services e-Bulletin November 2011 at [www.public.health.wa.gov.au/1/872/2/pharmaceutical_services.pm](http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au/1/872/2/pharmaceutical_services.pm)).

If you have other concerns, Pharmaceutical Services Branch staff are available 8.30 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays). Please telephone 9222 6883 or email poisons@health.wa.gov.au

Information current as at July 2012.