



# Emergency Department Discharge Medication Supply Procedure

Effective: 25 February 2021

## 1. Guiding Principles

The following information relates to the appropriate supply of medication to patients upon discharge from WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Emergency Departments (ED) in the South West region. The process to follow is dependent on the resources available to the individual ED.

## 2. Procedure

Generally patients are to be provided with a valid prescription for required medications when they are discharged from a WACHS-SW site, for the patient to take to a community pharmacy from dispensing.

At times, from a WACHS-SW ED only, the prescriber (doctor or nurse practitioner) may decide to provide a supply of medications to the patient on discharge rather than a prescription. The provision of discharge medication supply to ED patients is at the prescriber's discretion.

Refer to:

- [Statewide Medicines Formulary](#)
- [‘Requirements for prescriptions in Western Australia’](#)
- [Schedule 8 Medicines Prescribing Code \(Pharmaceutical Services Branch\)](#)
- [Opioids, benzodiazepines and other Schedule 8 medicines](#)
- [Structured Administration and Supply Arrangements](#)

### 2.1 General discharge prescribing information

- All medications prescribed within WACHS-SW facilities must be in line with Statewide Medicines Formulary (SMF) restrictions.
- Public hospital prescribers can prescribe medicine/s to patients upon discharge. Patients may be given a full course, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) pack size or one month supply of medicine, whichever is less.
- All prescriptions supplied to patients must meet state legislative requirements.
- All prescriptions for PBS medications should meet PBS requirements, including authority information. If they do not, there is the potential that the prescription will not be able to be dispensed by a community pharmacy or result in a significant financial cost to the patient.
- Prescriptions for non-PBS medications can be provided to the patient; however the prescriber must be aware and make the patient aware that this may result in a significant fee to the patient when dispensed by a community pharmacy.

- Prescriptions must be filled in correctly and completely including the patient name in prescriber's handwriting (under the addressograph).
- Schedule 8 medications must be written on a separate prescription with full patient details.
- Note that Schedule 8 prescriptions need to comply with PBS requirements in addition to **state legislative requirements**. Written authorisation to prescribe, from the CEO of WA Health is required to prescribe S8 drugs in specific circumstances. PBS/Medicare clerks (phone operators) are not necessarily aware of state legislation and may inform you that no approval is needed when a **state Department Of Health** authority is necessary.

See Related Documents - Schedule 8 Medicines Prescribing Code (Pharmaceutical Services Branch) and Information for Prescribing Schedule 8 Medicines in Western Australia (Pharmaceutical Services Branch)

- When a script is provided to be filled in the community, the triplicate copy (red portion / medical records copy) of the prescription should be left in the patient medical record as a record of what was prescribed. Hand written prescriptions need to be written in a way that ensures that this triplicate is legible.
- Specific PBS information is available via the Australian Government [Department of Health PBS](#) internet site.

### 2.1.1 Discharge medication dispensing from WACHS-SW Pharmacy Department (Bunbury Hospital)

Provision of discharge medication supply from the WACHS - South West Pharmacy Department is limited to patients discharged from Bunbury Hospital only and is prioritised as per the [Bunbury Hospital Ward Discharge Medication Flow Chart](#).

Supply is limited to medications that are commenced during the patient's hospital stay, medications that are altered (e.g. dose changes) during the patient's hospital stay, courses of antibiotics and short term courses of medications for pain relief.

Limited supply of medications to maintain continuity of supply for medications outside of the above limits, for at risk patients, may occur at the prescribers discretion.

## 2.2 General ED discharge supply information

- **Any** medications given to a patient on discharge must have full details recorded in the patient's medical record and documented in the Medication Supply Register.
- Care should be taken to avoid creating a drug seeking environment. When considering the supply of high risk medications (such as benzodiazepines or antipsychotics) or Schedule 8 (S8) medications, the prescriber must be of the belief that the patient is not drug dependant or undertaking medication diversion.
- Discharge medications should only be supplied in circumstances where a delay in commencement of treatment would be detrimental to patient care or where

there is a concern that the patient will not fill a prescription and therefore, not receive the required treatment.

- Discharge supplies should be of a quantity to enable administration until a community pharmacy is open or alternative supply arrangements can be made.
- ALL medications that are supplied upon discharge are to be recorded in the Medication Supply Register and reported to the WACHS-SW Pharmacy Department each month (copy of register to be emailed to [WACHS-SWBYHC.PharmacySupport@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:WACHS-SWBYHC.PharmacySupport@health.wa.gov.au) or faxed to 9722 1023 by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month). This will enable a report of any S8 medication supplied to be provided to the Pharmaceutical Services Branch of the WA Health Department as required under the Medicines & Poisons Act and Regulations.
- This applies to Bunbury Hospital ED when outside of Pharmacy hours and to all WACHS-SW District Site EDs. During Pharmacy hours supply for patients at Bunbury ED should occur via the WACHS-SW Pharmacy as per [2.1.1](#).

It is imperative to ensure that there is sufficient imprest stock on hand to allow for administration to inpatients prior to providing a full pack of any medication to a patient on discharge, rather than a prescription (consideration should be given to weekends where resupply may not occur until the next weekday or later).

### 2.3 Provision of a discharge medication supply from the ED by a doctor or nurse practitioner

Emergency discharge medication supply may only be provided to patients by **prescribers**.

Any medications supplied directly through the ED must be fully labelled using template labels. Full details must be recorded in the patient medical record, written on the patient's medication chart and documented in the Medication Supply Register.

These discharge supplies must comply with Medicine & Poisons Act and Regulations legal requirements for labelling and packaging, including specific labelling for medications that may cause drowsiness (Cautionary and Advisory label #1- see Appendix K of the [Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons \(SUSMP\)](#)). Packing is to occur in suitable pharmaceutical bottles and boxes only.

All provision of medications to patients **must** be performed by **prescribers** only. General nursing staff are not legally able to supply medications to patients.

Full supply is normally limited to children's antibiotics (as a full bottle needs to be reconstituted), or to medications that can only be used for a single patient such as eye drops, inhalers and creams.

The patient may also need to be provided with a separate prescription to have filled at a community pharmacy to complete the course of medication.

## 2.4 Provision of a starter pack supply by a registered nurse on a doctors verbal order

Supply of Department of Health approved Starter Packs are available at some district sites. The medication/s available as a Starter Pack are contained in a defined list authorised by the Department of Health. Supply is authorised under an approved [Structured Administration and Supply Arrangement](#), under the Medicines and Poisons Act & Regulations.

Starter Packs may be provided to a patient by a Registered Nurse (RN) on the verbal order of a doctor for the treatment of an acute medical condition. Provision of Starter Packs must be recorded by the RN in the Medication Supply Register.

Full details of the supply must be recorded by the RN in the patient medical record, written on the patient's medication chart and documented in the Medication Supply Register.

Within 72 hours of requesting supply of the Starter Pack the doctor must provide written confirmation in the patient medical of the request including:

- a) the name of the medical practitioner and
- b) the name of the registered nurse to whom the Starter Pack instruction was given and
- c) the name of the patient and
- d) the date and time when the instruction was given and
- e) details of the approved Starter Pack and
- f) any relevant directions for use that were to be given to the patient and
- g) any other information that the medical practitioner considers relevant.

## 2.5 Provision of relevant consumer medication information (CMI) to patients

Whenever medication supply occurs hospital staff should consider the provision of relevant consumer medication information to patients.

This may be via specific counselling from medical, nursing or pharmacy staff, supply of appropriate written information such as published CMI or provision of a medication list including reasons for use.

CMI is available to be downloaded from the TGA website for medications registered for use in Australia - <https://www.ebs.tga.gov.au/>

Specific consumer information is available for psychotropic medications from the WA Department of Health via the Choice and Medication website - <https://www.choiceandmedication.org/wadoh/printable-leaflets/> (Open with Google Chrome)

WACHS-SW also has a general consumer leaflet for patients – [Where to Find Medication Information](#).

### 3. Definitions

<b>Dispense</b>	Under the Medicines and Poisons Regulation 2016 a term related to the practice of pharmacy meaning to supply in accordance with a prescription
<b>Imprest</b>	Ward stock of commonly used medications maintained by an area
<b>Medical Record</b>	The medical record containing clinical notes for the patients stay. This includes Digital Medical Record (DMR) via BOSSnet where scanning of documents such as prescription triplicates is required as well as paper notes for those sites without a DMR.
<b>Prescriber</b>	The term prescriber relates to an individual who is legally authorised to prescribe and supply poisons as per the Poisons Regulations. It is the prescriber's professional responsibility to ensure that they are working within their scope of practice.
<b>Supply</b>	In relation to medications the provision of a medication to a patient by a prescriber, appropriately labelled and packaged to take after discharge from the hospital.
<b>WACHS –SW Pharmacy Department</b>	The WACHS-SW Pharmacy Department is located at Bunbury Hospital. Opening hours are Monday to Friday 0800 – 1630 (excluding public holidays) Discharge prescriptions are accepted for processing by the Pharmacy from 0800 – 1600 only.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

#### All Staff

All staff are required to work within their scope of practice and comply with the appropriate policies, guidelines and legal requirements to ensure that they are not in breach of their professional code of conduct, and potentially, the law.

#### Nursing Staff

Nursing staff are responsible for working within their scope of practice.  
In relation to Starter Packs they are responsible for correctly receiving the verbal order from the doctor and clearly and fully completing the required documentation for provision of a Starter Pack. They are responsible for following up with the doctor to ensure that written confirmation of the request is received within 72 hours.  
Nursing staff are not legally authorised to supply or dispense medications.

## **Nurse Practitioners**

Nurse Practitioners are responsible for the appropriate prescribing of discharge prescriptions.

They are also responsible for the appropriate supply, documentation (including labelling) and provision of discharge medications to patients attending Emergency Departments within the WACHS - South West region. Provision of supply is at the prescriber's discretion and should follow the processes detailed in this procedure.

## **Medical Staff**

Medical staff are responsible for the appropriate prescribing of discharge prescriptions and Starter Packs. They are also responsible for the appropriate supply, documentation (including labelling) and provision of discharge medications to patients attending Emergency Departments within the WACHS - South West region. Provision of supply is at the doctor's discretion and should follow the processes detailed in this procedure.

## **5. Compliance**

It is a requirement of the WA Health Code of Conduct that employees “comply with all state government policies, standards and Australian laws and understand and comply with all WA Health business, administration and operational directives and policies”.

Failure to comply with this procedure may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

## **6. Records Management**

All WACHS clinical records must be managed in accordance with [Health Record Management Policy](#).

Copy of register to be emailed to [WACHS-SWBYHC.PharmacySupport@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:WACHS-SWBYHC.PharmacySupport@health.wa.gov.au) or faxed to 9722 1023 by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## **7. Evaluation**

Monitoring of compliance with this document is to be carried out by prescribers and Nurse Unit Managers every month at the time of sending a copy of register to Pharmacy.



## 8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#)

Clinical Governance Standard: 1.6

Medication Safety Standard: 4.1, 4.4, 4.14, 4.15

## 9. Legislation

[Medicines and Poisons Act 2014](#)

[Medicines and Poisons Regulation 2016](#)

[Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons \(SUSMP\)](#)

## 10. References

[Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme](#)

[Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons \(SUSMP\)](#)

## 11. Related Forms

[“Where to find Medication Information Consumer Leaflet”](#)

## 12. Related Policy Documents

[WACHS-SW Bunbury Hospital Ward Discharge Medication Flowchart](#)

## 13. Related WA Health System Policies

MP 0077/18 [Statewide Medicines Formulary Policy](#)

## 14. Policy Framework

[Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats  
on request for a person with a disability**

<b>Contact:</b>	Regional Chief Pharmacist		
<b>Directorate:</b>	Operations South West	<b>EDRMS Record #</b>	ED-CO-15-12065
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