

Patient Information for Medicinal Cannabis

This information is for patients accessing medicinal cannabis in the ACT.

A Medicinal Cannabis Scheme has been established in the ACT to give people safe and legal access to high quality medicinal cannabis products in appropriate circumstances.

The ACT Medicinal Cannabis Scheme was implemented on 21 November 2016, following the Therapeutic Goods Administration decision to list medicinal cannabis as a controlled drug (Schedule 8) in the Poisons Standard.

As part of the scheme, prescribers are able to apply for approval from the ACT Chief Health Officer to prescribe medicinal cannabis.

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 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.

Medicinal Cannabis Category Approval

Category 6 – Medicinal Cannabis in the ACT Controlled Medicines Prescribing Standards provides guidance to prescribers and helps to provide patients with more timely access to medicinal cannabis 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.

Eligible patients are able to access medicinal cannabis through their prescriber. Their prescriber will need to seek approval from the ACT Chief Health Officer before prescribing.

Prescribers may also apply for approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis for other indications. These applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

How patients can access Medicinal Cannabis in the ACT

1. If you are a patient (or their carer), you should speak with your health practitioner about whether medicinal cannabis is suitable for your condition.
2. If your health practitioner believes it may be effective, they will need to seek approval to prescribe a medicinal cannabis product for you from the ACT Chief Health Officer.
3. Your health practitioner will then need to seek approval from the Therapeutic Goods Administration to supply the product to you.
4. Once approved, your health practitioner will arrange for a pharmacist to dispense the medication to you.

Further Information

For further information, please visit www.health.act.gov.au/pharmaceuticalservices or contact the Pharmaceutical Services Section of the Health Protection Service on (02) 6205 0998.

Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



Interpreter

If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

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