

## Patient Information for Medicinal Cannabis

The ACT Medicinal Cannabis Scheme was established on 21 November 2016 to provide safe and legal access to high quality medicinal cannabis products in appropriate circumstances.

Implementation of the ACT scheme followed the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) decision to list medicinal cannabis as a controlled drug (Schedule 8) in the Commonwealth Poisons Standard.

### 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 may apply for ACT Chief Health Officer approval to prescribe medicinal cannabis, 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.

## 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, 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 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.

## 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 approvals to prescribe medicinal cannabis through the TGA's single online application form, located on the TGA's [Special Access Scheme](#) website.
3. Once approved, your health practitioner will arrange for a pharmacist to order the medicine and dispense it to you.

## 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 9208.

### Accessibility

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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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