

Codeine Rescheduling 1 Feb 2018

Prepare Now

All codeine-containing medicines will become Schedule 4 and require a prescription from 1 February 2018

Affected products include:

- codeine-containing combination analgesics
- codeine-containing cough, cold and flu products

Why are these products being re-scheduled?

- Codeine in over-the-counter combination products is widely accessible and over-use is difficult to monitor.
- Codeine isn't intended for long-term use, but public consultation reveals many consumers use them long-term (including for sleep, anxiety and stress).
- There is little evidence codeine products are more effective than alternatives without codeine.
- The codeine component can lead to opioid tolerance, overuse, misuse and dependence related behaviours and harms.
- In products containing a combination of codeine with paracetamol or ibuprofen, there is a risk of severe toxicity when taken in higher doses and for longer periods.

Analgesics:

Includes Panadeine[®], Panamax Co[®], Prodeine Extra[®], Nurofen Plus[®], Panafen Plus[®], Rafen Plus[®], Mersyndol[®], Aspalgin[®], Codis[®] and generic versions.

Cough, Cold, Flu:

Includes Codral[®], Demazin[®] and generic versions

What can GPs do to prepare?

- **Start conversations early:**
 - with professional colleagues to develop a consistent approach
 - with patients to avoid anxiety or hoarding behaviour
- **Assess patients** requesting codeine-containing products for reasons for use, perceived benefits, pain, current management and level of codeine use.
- **Provide patient education** around alternative pain management options other than opioids.
- **Consider referral** to the Medication Support and Recovery Service (MSRS) where patients can receive assistance with problematic use of codeine in a community health setting – a free service, available now 1800 931 101 www.msrs.org.au
- **Learn how to prescribe buprenorphine/naloxone (Suboxone[®])** to treat opioid dependence
- **Information and resources** at www.emphn.org.au/codeine

