



# Codeine access for rural and remote Australians

## Information for consumers

*From 1 February 2018, medicines containing codeine will no longer be available without a prescription.*

### Ask your pharmacist

Most people should be able to manage their short-term (acute) pain or cough and cold symptoms with other medicines that don't contain codeine. These medicines are available at your local pharmacy without a prescription and are known as 'over-the-counter' medicines.

Pharmacists are health professionals who have an extensive knowledge of medicines, their benefits, interactions and side effects. They will be able to recommend the most appropriate medicine for you. Speaking with your pharmacist is particularly important if you are taking any medicines and/or have any medical conditions.

### Talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner

Did you know over-the-counter codeine-containing medicines are only intended to treat short-term (acute) pain and not long-term (chronic) pain? Do you feel you will need to continue using codeine-containing medicines after 1 February 2018?

If you have ongoing (recurrent, persistent or chronic) pain you should talk to either your pharmacist, doctor or nurse practitioner about the best way to manage your pain. These health professionals can determine the best course of treatment for you, which could include non-medicine therapies such as treatment from a physiotherapist or self-management tools such as exercise or relaxation.



Visiting your doctor or other health professional is important to ensure that any medicines being used are the most appropriate for your health care. It is also important that you discuss any health problems or side effects that you may be experiencing.

Your pharmacist or other health professionals will be able to provide advice on the most appropriate medicines for you



Your health professional can also provide information and referrals if they feel you may require extra help to manage your chronic pain. This referral could be to a specialist near you or via a service called 'Telehealth' that is funded by the Department of Health. This service gives Australians living in rural and remote areas greater access to a range of specialists.



Telehealth services use information and communication techniques (such as video conferencing) to deliver health services across Australia without the need for travel.

For more information about Telehealth see the Department of Health website at [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/e-health-telehealth](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/e-health-telehealth) and [www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/connectinghealthservices-patients-QA](http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/connectinghealthservices-patients-QA).

## Prescribing by registered nurses

In some jurisdictions, remote area nurses and registered nurses can prescribe codeine-containing medicines under specific circumstances.

For more information contact your local community health centre. See the table: **Finding community health centres and remote health services in your area.**

## Phone advice

For free health advice 24 hours, 7 days a week, you can call **Healthdirect Australia** on **1800 022 222**. Healthdirect is able to provide you with advice on all health topics, including pain management in acute or chronic situations. For more information on pain management, visit [www.healthdirect.gov.au/pain-and-aches](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au/pain-and-aches).

## Find community health centres and remote health services in your area

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|------------|---|
| <b>ACT</b> | <b>13 2281</b><br><a href="http://www.health.act.gov.au/community-health-centres">http://www.health.act.gov.au/community-health-centres</a>   |
| <b>NSW</b> | <b>(02) 9391 9000</b><br><a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd/Pages/default.aspx</a>  |
| <b>NT</b>  | <b>(08) 8999 5511</b><br><b>Community Care Centres:</b><br><a href="https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/hospitals-health-services/community-care-centre">https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/hospitals-health-services/community-care-centre</a><br><b>Remote health services:</b><br><a href="https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/remote-health/remote-health-services">https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/remote-health/remote-health-services</a><br><b>Urgent after hours care:</b><br><a href="https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/emergencies-injuries-and-accidents/after-hours-medical-care">https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/emergencies-injuries-and-accidents/after-hours-medical-care</a> |
| <b>QLD</b> | <b>13 43 25 84 or (07) 3234 0111</b><br><a href="http://www.health.qld.gov.au/services">www.health.qld.gov.au/services</a>  |
| <b>SA</b>  | <b>(08) 8226 6000</b><br><a href="http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+services/national+health+services+directory/national+health+services+directory">http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+services/national+health+services+directory/national+health+services+directory</a>  |
| <b>TAS</b> | <b>1300 135 513</b><br><b>North West:</b> <a href="http://ths.tas.gov.au/nw">http://ths.tas.gov.au/nw</a><br><b>North:</b> <a href="http://ths.tas.gov.au/north">http://ths.tas.gov.au/north</a><br><b>South:</b> <a href="http://ths.tas.gov.au/south">http://ths.tas.gov.au/south</a>   |
| <b>WA</b>  | <b>(08) 9222 4222</b><br><a href="http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Services-search">http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Services-search</a>  |
| <b>VIC</b> | <b>1300 650 172</b><br><a href="https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/primary-and-community-health/community-health/community-health-directory">https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/primary-and-community-health/community-health/community-health-directory</a>  |

For more resources and further information about codeine search for **TGA Codeine Information Hub** or go to [www.tga.gov.au/codeine-info-hub](http://www.tga.gov.au/codeine-info-hub)