

Working with medicines

# Veterinary Professionals

## Regulations

Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses, registered with the Veterinary Surgeons Board, have various authorities under the Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016 to purchase, hold and use prescription medicines.

## Authority

The following table outlines veterinary professionals with authority to use medicines under the Regulations:

| **Practitioner** | **Type of Authority** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Obtain (purchase)** | **Possess** | **Administer** | **Supply** | **Prescribe** |
| Veterinary Surgeon | 🗸 | 🗸 | 🗸 | 🗸 | 🗸 |
| Veterinary Nurse |  | 🗸 | 🗸 under direction of a vet |  |  |

Authority is limited to the lawful practice of the professional and includes:

* for animal / veterinary practice only;
* within scope of practice / general professional limitations;
* for patients under the care of the health practitioner;
* at the registered veterinary practice or place of residence of the patient;
* in the course of operating the business / as part of employment; and
* any relevant restrictions or conditions imposed on the individual practitioner.

Scope of practice for veterinary professionals is defined by the Veterinary Surgeons Board.

## Purchasing medicines

Veterinary surgeons may purchase medicines in their own name, for the treatment of patients under their care. A Permit is required to purchase medicines in name of a business, or where inventory will be shared between multiple dentists for use at the one practice.

## Supply and prescription

Veterinary surgeons may personally administer, prescribe or supply a Schedule 4 (S4) or Schedule 8 (S8) medicine in accordance with their authority. Any medicine supplied must be appropriately packaged and fully labelled according to regulations. Veterinary medicines supplied must be labelled with the species of animal being treated and with the words “FOR ANIMAL TREATMENT ONLY”.

Pharmacists may dispense S4 and S8 veterinary prescriptions.

A veterinary nurse may administer a S4 or S8 medicine to an animal on the personal direction of a veterinary surgeon. Direction may be written or verbal, and provided through electronic or telephone means. Records of any direction must be maintained in accordance with the Regulations.

## Storage

S4 medicines must be stored in a locked storage facility to prevent unauthorised access. For example: a lockable room, cupboard, cabinet or refrigerator. Precautions must be taken to ensure keys are not accessible to unauthorised staff.

S8 medicines must be stored in a locked purpose-built drug safe. Storage of a total of S8 medicines less than of 250 doses requires a small safe and greater than 500 doses requires a large safe. Motion detectors covering the safe are required when more than 250 doses are stored.

If treating patients outside of a veterinary practice, medicines must remain in the possession of the authorised practitioner at all times and all reasonable steps must be taken to prevent their loss or theft. The quantity held must be the minimum required to treat patients. Special precautions must be observed for S8 medicines.

## Recording

Veterinary professionals must make accurate clinical records of all medicines administered or supplied and retain these for at least 2 years for S4 medicines, or 5 years for S8 medicines. All records must be available to be produced if demanded by an authorised officer of the Department of Health.

A register of transactions, kept in an approved manner and form, must be maintained for all incoming and outgoing S8 medicines. A monthly inventory must be also performed.

## Compliance assessment

Veterinary practices and veterinary professionals may be required to participate in routine audit assessments to monitor compliance with these requirements. Non-compliance with the Regulations may result in regulatory actions such as restrictions or loss of medicines authorities, notification to the Veterinary Surgeons Board, and/or prosecution under the legislation.

## More information

For more information contact the Medicines and Poisons Regulation Branch on:

* (08) 9222 6883 (Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm)
* [poisons@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:poisons@health.wa.gov.au)