

# Fact Sheet - Changes to Medicines with Codeine

## What's changing?

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

## Why?

Codeine is becoming a commonly used drug of dependence and research indicates that, in low doses, it is not an effective pain reliever. The harms caused by misuse of codeine, such as liver damage and overdose, are another reason for the change.

## Which medicines are affected?

- Paracetamol 500mg + codeine  $\leq 15$ mg (eg PanadeineR, Panadeine ExtraR, Mersyndol DayStrengthR)
- Ibuprofen 200mg + codeine  $\leq 15$ mg (eg Nurofen PlusR, Panafen PlusR)
- Paracetamol 500mg + codeine  $\leq 15$ mg + Doxylamine  $\leq 5.1$ mg (eg MersyndolR, DolasedR)
- Aspirin  $\leq 500$ mg + codeine  $\leq 15$ mg (AspalginR, Dispirin ForteR, CodisR)
- Cough and Cold medicines (eg Codral Original Cold & FluR, Demazin Day & Night Cold & FluR)

## How can I keep accessing these medicines?

From 1 February 2018, you will need a prescription from a GP to access codeine in any formulation.

## How much will I need to pay for these prescription medicines?

If these medicines are listed on the PBS, you won't have to pay more than the PBS co-payment. If you are a concessional patient, you will pay no more than the concessional co-payment for your PBS medicine, which is limited to \$6.30.

## What happens if these medicines are not listed on the PBS?

If your medicine is not listed on the PBS, you can still fill the prescription however it will not be subsidised by the Australian Government. You should ask your GP about the best options for your particular needs.

## Tips for managing the changeover

The change occurs on 1 February 2018, so go and see your doctor and work out what needs to be done to ensure this change is not too difficult for you to manage.

If you're on methadone or suboxone and also use codeine, you could ask your GP for a codeine script during your regular three month script renewal to save on extra GP visits. Prescriptions are generally valid for 12 months after the GP provides them, although prescriptions for some medications are only valid for six months.

## Where can I find some more information?

Visit [tga.gov.au](http://tga.gov.au) and follow the links to the 'Codeine Information Hub' for more details.