

Health Protection Division  
Poisons Control, Environmental Health Program  
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Dear Doctor

## **VOLUNTARY CONTRACT NOTIFICATION SCHEME**

A **voluntary** notification scheme for prescription of Schedule 8 (S8) medicines is currently in place in the Northern Territory. The scheme is maintained through the Department of Health and Families (DHF) Poisons Control. Participation in the scheme provides an additional safeguard to the GP when prescribing S8 medicine, improves patient care and reduces diversion.

The voluntary notification scheme operates by matching a patient with a prescribing doctor on a central database by means of a prescribing contract. The use of a contract between the patient and doctor is a proven measure to clarify the rights and responsibilities of both parties through a shared care arrangement. The contract may be used for other problematic medicines as well as S8s. The contract form has been worded so that the patient agrees to allow Poisons Control to advise other doctors, Alcohol and other Drugs Services nurses and pharmacists about the contract. A copy of the contract is attached.

Once a prescribing contract has been agreed and signed, the form should be faxed to DHF Poisons Control, where details of the patient's surname, first name, date of birth, Medicare number, doctor and/or pharmacy, and S8 medication are entered into a database. Any duplication of contracts or S8 prescriptions to the same name will be identified by Poisons Control and reported to both of the GPs, who can then determine the appropriate course of action.

When completing a contract, the patient needs to nominate a single pharmacy for prescription dispensing. Doctors are advised to contact the nominated pharmacy to check that pharmacy is prepared to participate in the contract.

Completed contracts need to be faxed to Poisons Control on 8922 7200.

We have also recently launched a secure website which can be accessed by doctors and pharmacists to view the latest contract list at any time.

Further information is available from the poisons inspectors on telephone 8922 7341.

Yours sincerely

Helgi Stone  
Manager Poisons Control  
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