

## Controlled Drugs- Prescriber Guidance

All Schedules 2 and 3 Controlled Drugs (CDs) must be indelible, *signed* by the prescriber, include the *date* on which they were signed, and specify the prescriber's *address* (must be within the UK). A machine-written prescription is acceptable, but the prescriber's signature must be handwritten. Advanced electronic signatures can be accepted for Schedule 2 and 3 CDs where the Electronic Prescribing Service (EPS) is used. They must always state:

- **the name and address of the patient** (use of a PO Box is not acceptable);
- **the dosage form** e.g. tablets must be included and where appropriate, the strength of the preparation. Where a prescription requests multiple strengths, each strength should be prescribed separately (i.e. separate dose, total quantity, etc)
- **for liquids**, the total volume in millilitres (in both words and figures) of the preparation to be supplied
- **for dosage units** (tablets, capsules, ampoules), state the total number (in both words and figures) of dosage units to be supplied (e.g. 10 tablets [of 10 mg] rather than 100 mg total quantity);
- **the dose**, which must be clearly defined (i.e. the instruction 'one as directed' constitutes a dose but 'as directed' does not); it is not necessary that the dose is stated in both words and figures;
- the words 'for dental treatment only' if issued by a dentist.

A pharmacist is **not** allowed to dispense a CD unless all the information required by law is given on the prescription. In the case of a prescription for a CD in Schedule 2 or 3, a pharmacist can amend the prescription *if* it specifies the total quantity only in words or in figures or if it contains minor typographical errors, provided that such amendments are indelible and clearly attributable to the pharmacist (e.g. name, date, signature and GPhC registration number). The prescription should be marked with the date of supply at the time the CD supply is made.

The Department of Health and the Scottish Government strongly recommend the maximum quantity of Schedule 2, 3 or 4 CDs prescribed not exceed 30 days; exceptionally, to cover justifiable clinical need a prescription can be issued for a longer period, but the reasons for the decision should be recorded on the patient's notes.

A prescription for a CD in Schedules 2, 3, or 4 is valid for 28 days from the date stated thereon (the prescriber may forward-date the prescription; the start date may also be specified in the body of the prescription). Schedule 5 prescriptions are valid for 6 months from the appropriate date.

Medicines that are not CDs should not be prescribed on the same form as a Schedule 2 or 3 CD.

Full guidance and a sample prescription can be viewed on BNF.ORG [Controlled drugs and drug dependence](#) | [Medicines guidance](#) | [BNF content published by NICE](#)