DOCTORS OF SOUTH MELBOURNE

ADHD Medication Rules
Fact Sheet

This fact sheet outlines the rules and regulations governing the use of ADHD medications for both adults and children. It covers prescribing, SafeScript conditions, international travel, and driving.

Overview

Many ADHD medications contain stimulants, which carry a risk of misuse and are therefore classified as restricted substances – specifically, Schedule 8 (S8) medications.

S8 medications require a special authority prescription.

Prescribing Requirements for GPs

Your GP must follow strict rules before prescribing ADHD (S8) medicines.

Since October 2026, Victorian GPs no longer need a permit from the Department of Health to prescribe these medicines. Instead, you need a valid **ADHD treatment instruction.** This is a letter from one of the following:

- a psychiatrist (not a psychologist)
- a paediatrician
- an ADHD practitioner, which is a GP who has completed additional training approved by the Department of Health.

Once you have a valid treatment instruction, any GP or nurse practitioner can prescribe your medication. There is no waiting period for permit approval.

From 1 December 2026, the letter must include:

- your medication name, dose, frequency and maximum dose
- details of your ADHD diagnosis.

An ADHD treatment instruction stays valid until the review date your specialist sets, if they set one. Book your review appointment well ahead of that date, as specialist wait times can be long.

If you're already on a permit, the letter the specialist wrote to your GP will likely be adequate as an ADHD treatment instruction. Some letters may need updating.

The old permit rule of having to receive all your ADHD scripts from that clinic no longer applies. However, it's still recommended for continuity of care.

Your GP will check SafeScript, Victoria's real-time prescription monitoring system, every time they prescribe.

A permit is still required in some situations, such as when stimulants are prescribed for a condition other than ADHD or if you are a drug dependent person.

Getting an appointment with a paediatrician or psychiatrist can take up to six months or longer.

Safety & Precautions

You must see your prescriber at least every six months for a face-to-face consultation. During these visits, your doctor will monitor your blood pressure, weight, and other relevant health indicators based on your individual circumstances.

Please ensure you take your medication as usual on the day of these appointments. This allows your doctor to accurately monitor its effect on your blood pressure and heart rate.

We cannot issue S8 prescriptions without a consultation, so please plan ahead and avoid waiting until you've run out.

The Department of Health require all S8 medications to be recorded in the *SafeScript system*. This allows doctors and pharmacists to monitor prescribing and dispensing, ensuring safe and appropriate use.

S8 Script Conditions

Please be aware of the following guidelines regarding your prescription:

- Most S8 prescriptions expire after six months, regardless of the number of repeats remaining.
- Pharmacists are required to monitor SafeScript before dispensing medications and typically will not be able to issue repeats early. Please speak to your doctor if you're travelling and require more.
- It is important not to lose your medication, as replacement scripts can be difficult to arrange and may require additional review or approval.

Other Important Considerations

- International travel: Stimulant medications can be restricted or illegal in some countries, even if you have a valid prescription. Always research the laws of your destination before travelling. In some cases, you may need to leave your medication at home.

- **Driving**: Stimulant medication may show positive for amphetamines on a roadside drug test. If so, we recommend carrying a copy of your S8 permit while driving and showing it to the police if necessary. Please ask your doctor for a copy if you need one.
- **Medication interactions**: ADHD medications can interact with a wide range of other prescription drugs and illicit substances. Tell all healthcare providers and pharmacists about your current treatment to avoid adverse effects.

Management Options

Managing ADHD can be complex, and medication is just one factor in ongoing treatment.

Sometimes, finding the right medication for your unique needs can take time and may involve trial and error.

Please speak with your doctor if your current treatment plan isn't giving you the results you hoped for.