

## Fact Sheet

# Access to nicotine products

From 1 October 2021 changes to the national classification of nicotine in the [Poisons Standard](#) clarify the regulation of nicotine as a **Schedule 4 Prescription Only Medicine**. This means that consumers will require a prescription to legally access nicotine-containing e-cigarettes and nicotine vaping products for any purpose.

## Why have there been changes to the Scheduling classification of nicotine?

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) made the [decision](#) to amend the Scheduling of nicotine in the interests of public health. There has been a significant increase in the use of nicotine e-cigarettes and other nicotine vaping products by young people in Australia and in many other countries. The TGA decision balances the need to prevent adolescents and young adults from taking-up nicotine vaping products while allowing current smokers to access these products for smoking cessation with appropriate medical advice.

## What nicotine products are affected by the Scheduling changes?

### Nicotine replacement therapies

Nicotine replacement therapies such as nicotine patches, sprays, lozenges and gums are not affected by the Scheduling changes and do not require a prescription. These products will continue to be available from pharmacies and some retail outlets.

### Nicotine vaping products and e-cigarettes containing nicotine

Nicotine vaping products such as e-cigarettes containing nicotine, nicotine pods and liquid nicotine will only be available on prescription from an Australian registered medical practitioner, for purposes of smoking cessation. This applies to products purchased in Australia and imported from overseas suppliers.

## What do the changes mean for people using nicotine vaping products?

Consumers may be able to access nicotine vaping products if a medical practitioner considers this to be an appropriate treatment to help with stopping smoking and provides the person with a valid medical prescription. Consumers will not be able to access nicotine vaping products without a valid medical prescription, regardless of the purpose for use.

Consumers should be aware that it is an offence under the *Controlled Substances Act 1984* to possess liquid nicotine or a nicotine vaping product without a valid medical prescription.

## How do I find a doctor who can prescribe nicotine vaping products?

Talk with your GP about smoking cessation options.

The TGA also publishes a list of doctors who are [Authorised Prescribers](#) of nicotine vaping products and who have consented to having their name published. The list is published on the TGA website.



## How are nicotine vaping products accessed with a prescription?

There are two ways to obtain nicotine vaping products with a valid prescription:

- > have the prescription filled at a pharmacy
- > import the nicotine vaping product from overseas using the TGA's [Personal Importation Scheme](#).

For more information about [importing nicotine vaping products](#) under the Personal Importation Scheme go to the TGA website.

Be aware that apart from pharmacies dispensing nicotine vaping products to patients with a prescription, it is illegal under federal and state laws for any other retailer, including vape stores, to sell nicotine vaping products.

## Information for doctors and pharmacists

The TGA publishes information about requirements for prescribing, sourcing, compounding and dispensing nicotine vaping products for [prescribers](#) and [pharmacists](#).

Prescribers and pharmacists should also be familiar with relevant professional practice guidelines such as those published by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

There are currently no nicotine vaping products approved by the TGA and registered in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG). Medicines that are not in the ARTG are known as 'unapproved' medicines. Pharmacists can only dispense a prescription for nicotine vaping products with evidence that the prescriber has TGA approval through the TGA Authorised Prescriber or Special Access Scheme (Category B).

Practical information for prescribers, including to raise awareness of how to prescribe nicotine vaping products in Australia, is also available in the TGA's [Guidance for the use of nicotine vaping products for smoking cessation](#).

## E-cigarette and vaping laws in South Australia

Vaping/e-cigarette products are subject to South Australian tobacco and e-cigarette laws (*Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997*) regarding restrictions and requirements for advertising, points of sale and supply to minors.

Vaping/e-cigarette products including nicotine vaping products lawfully prescribed for a person cannot be used in any area in which smoking is banned under the *Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997*. This includes enclosed public places, hospitals, workplaces and shared areas, including inside a retail shop, outdoor dining areas and other outdoor areas that have been declared smoke-free.

From 1 October 2021, pharmacists and medical practitioners may sell nicotine and nicotine vaping products lawfully prescribed for a person in accordance with TGA requirements and are exempted from licence arrangements under the *Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997*. More information about [tobacco and e-cigarette laws](#) is published on the SA Health website.

## Further information and reporting questionable practices

The TGA publishes extensive information for consumers, health professionals, sponsors, wholesalers and manufacturers, including links to resources and factsheets about access to nicotine vaping products at <https://www.tga.gov.au/nicotine-vaping-products>.

Questionable practices or perceived breaches of Therapeutic Goods law in relation to the import, manufacture, supply, or advertising of nicotine vaping products should be reported to the TGA. This includes the sale of nicotine vaping products by a retailer other than a pharmacist (e.g. by a vape store).

***For further information contact the TGA by email at [info@tga.gov.au](mailto:info@tga.gov.au) or by calling 1800 020 653.***

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For more information

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For enquiries about South Australia's tobacco and e-cigarette laws and restrictions on the sale of nicotine by sellers other than pharmacies, **contact SA Health's Health Protection Operations by email at [HealthProtectionOperations@sa.gov.au](mailto:HealthProtectionOperations@sa.gov.au) or by calling (08) 8226 7100.**