

# Medication Safety Alert

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Issued by Medicines and Technology Programs, SA Health  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/medicationsafety](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/medicationsafety)



A patient **Safety Alert** advises of safety matters needing **immediate attention and mandatory action** to address high risk safety problems.

## We recommend you inform:

- Chief Executive Officers
- General Managers
- Medical Directors
- Nursing Directors
- Pharmacy Directors
- Directors of Clinical Governance
- Drug and Therapeutics Committees
- Medication Safety Committees
- Clinical Departmental Managers

## Contact details:

T: (08) 8226 7240  
E: [HealthMedicationSafety@sa.gov.au](mailto:HealthMedicationSafety@sa.gov.au)

## Clonazepam Oral Liquid – Dose Errors

### Purpose

- > To raise awareness of the potential for dose errors when prescribing and administering clonazepam oral liquid.
- > To recommend a standardised approach to reduce the risk of dose errors.

### Background

- > Clonazepam oral liquid is available as a 2.5mg/mL solution in a dropper bottle - **one drop contains 0.1 mg clonazepam**.
- > Serious incidents have been reported, whereby patients have received incorrect doses up to 10 and 25 times the intended dose.
- > Lack of a standardised unit of measure when prescribing and administering is a major contributing factor in such incidents.



**Clonazepam oral liquid must be prescribed and administered as DROPS**

**1 DROP = 0.1mg**

**Do not remove dropper device from bottle**

A 'drop' refers to ONE drop measured from the dropper device provided on the original bottle

### Prescribing clonazepam oral liquid

- > Prescribe doses of clonazepam oral liquid in **DROPS (with milligram dose in brackets)**.
- > Include the strength (2.5mg/mL) in the medicine name.
- > When ordering on a paper medication chart include annotation "1 drop = 0.1mg".

Date	Medicine (print generic name)		
5/9	clonazepam liquid 2.5mg/mL		
Route	Dose	Hourly frequency	Max PRN dose/24 hrs
PO	2 drops (0.2mg)	12hrly	PRN 4 drops (0.4mg)
Indication	Pharmacy		
anxiety	1 drop = 0.1mg		
Prescriber signature	Print your name	Contact	
ADoctor	Any Doctor	#213	

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- > When ordering in EPAS a dose and unit of measure is required; the default unit of measure is 'drops'.
- > Use standardised terminology, abbreviations and symbols when prescribing.
- > Review concomitantly prescribed medications that may contribute to over-sedation, e.g. opioids, antipsychotics, other benzodiazepines.
- > Note: clonazepam tablets can be crushed and are available as an alternative.

## Dispensing clonazepam oral liquid

- > Pharmacy to apply additional labelling to all clonazepam dropper bottles to highlight:

**1 DROP = 0.1mg**

## Administering clonazepam oral liquid

- > Check the dose is correct in **drops AND milligrams (mg)**.
- > If the dose is unclear, check with the prescriber.
- > DO NOT administer drops directly into mouth from the bottle, as overdosing can occur easily.
- > Administer by counting the number of drops onto a spoon/measuring cup.

## Action required by SA Health services

1. Ensure all relevant staff are aware of and have access to this notice.
2. Review existing processes, and develop and implement an action plan to support the safe prescribing and administration of clonazepam oral liquid. Action plan should include education of prescribers, nurses and pharmacists.

## Notification of compliance

Safety Alert Broadcast System Officers are to:

1. Immediately confirm receipt of this alert by email to [SABS@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:SABS@health.sa.gov.au).
2. Circulate this information to all clinical areas and those listed on this alert within 24 hours of receipt.
3. For any clarification please email [HealthMedicationSafety@sa.gov.au](mailto:HealthMedicationSafety@sa.gov.au).



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health

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