



VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS BOARD
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Supplying prescription only medicines

In the ACT, the appropriate prescription and supply of medications is regulated by ACT Health under the [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008](#) and the [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008](#).

The [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008](#) outlines what authority registered veterinary practitioners have when dealing with medicines and states that:

Veterinary practitioners to the extent necessary to practise veterinary medicine and, if employed, within the scope of employment, can do any of the following:

- (a) issue purchase orders for medicines;*
- (b) obtain medicines;*
- (c) possess medicines;*
- (d) administer medicines;*
- (e) prescribe medicines;*
- (f) supply—*
 - (i) pharmacy medicines if labelled with words to the effect of 'for animal treatment only'; or*
 - (ii) pharmacist only medicines supplied in person by a veterinary practitioner if labelled with words to the effect of 'for animal treatment only'; or*
 - (iii) medicines to custodians of animals during consultations if labelled in accordance with [s 161](#).*

Veterinarians are not permitted to fill prescriptions. Under the [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008](#) veterinary practitioners are not authorised to dispense. *Dispense* means supply on prescription. Dispensing scheduled drugs based solely on another veterinary practitioner's prescription is unlawful.

Veterinary practitioners are only authorised to supply prescription-only medications **during consultation**.

ACT Health and the ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board consider that, for the purposes of the above, a **consultation** may include:

- a standard in-person consultation in the veterinary practice; or
- a consultation by the veterinary practitioner during a visit to a home or farm; or
- a telemedicine consultation; or
- a veterinary practitioner consulting with another registered veterinary practitioner about a case; or



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- a consultation with an owner around an appropriate need for resupply of a scheduled medicine.

ACT Health and the ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board consider that for a **consultation** to have occurred, a veterinary practitioner **must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that a therapeutic need for the specific drug is established, and they must document those steps.**

Scenarios:

A client requests a repeat of a prescription-only medicine previously supplied by the veterinary practitioner or another veterinary practitioner working at that practice

If presented with this scenario, a veterinary practitioner must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that a therapeutic need for the specific drug is established, and they must document those steps. This fulfils the requirement for a consultation to have occurred prior to supply.

It may be that in some cases the veterinary practitioner could be satisfied that a therapeutic need exists by reviewing the clinical record and questioning the owner as to the animal's progress. This review must be undertaken by the veterinary practitioner and cannot be delegated to a receptionist or veterinary nurse.

In cases where the veterinary practitioner is not satisfied that a therapeutic need is established (e.g. if the dose prescribed seems inappropriate, or if the owner says the animal is not tolerating the medication, or further monitoring such as blood tests or re-examination are required), additional steps to establish therapeutic need may be required, such as discussing the case further with the regular treating practitioner or examining the animal.

A person who is visiting the ACT from out of the area presents to a veterinary practice because they have run out of their pet's prescription-only medicine for a medical condition

If presented with this scenario, a veterinary practitioner must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that a therapeutic need for the specific drug is established, and they must document those steps. This fulfils the requirement for a consultation to have occurred prior to supply.

It may be that in some cases the veterinary practitioner could be satisfied that a therapeutic need exists by ringing the regular treating practitioner or requesting the clinical record from the other practice, and questioning the owner as to the animal's progress.

In cases where the veterinary practitioner is not satisfied that a therapeutic need is established (e.g. if the dose prescribed seems inappropriate, or if the owner says the animal is not tolerating the medication, or further monitoring such as blood tests or re-examination are required), additional steps to establish therapeutic need may be required, such as discussing the case further with the regular treating practitioner or examining the animal.



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It is not sufficient to rely on a copy of clinical records supplied by the owner. The review of the case must be undertaken by the veterinary practitioner and cannot be delegated to a receptionist or veterinary nurse.

In both scenarios, a clinical record must be created for the patient. The steps that the veterinary practitioner has undertaken to determine the therapeutic need, and the details of the drug dispensed, must be recorded in this record.