



# TRAVELLING WITH MEDICINES

Before travelling overseas you should check what you need to do as there are rules for bringing drugs and medicines into and taking drugs and medicines out of Australia. These rules vary depending on the type of drug you need to carry with you. You may need to obtain an import permit, a letter from your medical practitioner or a copy of your prescription before you travel.

## BRINGING MEDICINES INTO AUSTRALIA

You do not need a permit to bring in most prescription medicines even if they contain a controlled substance, providing the following conditions are met:

- you are arriving in Australia as a passenger on board a ship or aircraft
- the medicine is carried in your accompanied baggage
- you carry a letter or copy of your prescription (written in English) from your medical practitioner to certify that the medicine has been prescribed to you to treat a medical condition
- the quantity of the medicine does not exceed three months' supply.

Please note that the passenger exemption is not valid for all drugs and preparations.

Some medicines always require a permit. This includes anabolic and androgenic substances (steroids), products containing DHEA, yohimbine, thalidomide, fenciclor and triparanol.

Import permits for these medicines are issued by the Office of Chemical Safety or the Therapeutic Goods Administration depending on the type of medication.

Check the TGA and Department of Health and Ageing websites for further information and advice:

- [www.tga.gov.au/consumers/travellers-entering.htm#restrictions](http://www.tga.gov.au/consumers/travellers-entering.htm#restrictions) [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/treaties-and-compliance](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/treaties-and-compliance)

General over-the-counter products available in Australia can be brought in without restriction. This includes products such as Panadol, Panadeine, Nurofen and Nurofen Plus.

## COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINES

Some complementary medicines, including traditional and herbal remedies, dietary supplements or natural remedies, may have ingredients that require a permit or a prescription or letter from a medical practitioner before the goods will be allowed entry into Australia. Some of the products have been identified to contain controlled substances (for example, yohimbine or DHEA). Also, some herbal or traditional medicines/remedies are prohibited under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). CITES provides controls for the international trade of products derived from endangered animals or plants. Enquiries regarding complementary, herbal or natural traditional medicines should be emailed to: [info@tga.gov.au](mailto:info@tga.gov.au) and for medicines containing CITES listed species, email: [wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au](mailto:wildlifetrade@environment.gov.au).

## BRINGING IN MEDICINES FOR SPORTING TEAMS AND ATHLETES

The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) works closely with the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) to prevent the importation of sports related performance and image enhancing drugs.

There are special rules that apply to sporting teams who are bringing medicinal products into Australia.

The passenger exemption for Human Growth Hormones and similar products does not apply to athletes, competitors, support staff such as coaches or managers, or any associated person. A permit is required for these types of medicines for each individual traveller.

Sporting teams should provide a list of all the medicines and products contained in their team's medical kit to the Department of Health to obtain advice and approval well before the team arrives in Australia.

The team representative must declare medical kits and medicines to ACBPS when teams or athletes arrive in Australia. The team representative will be asked to produce the approval from the Department of Health for the medical kit and any other medications.

Further information is available through the following links:

- [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/treaties-and-compliance](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/treaties-and-compliance)
- [www.tga.gov.au/consumers/travellers-entering.htm](http://www.tga.gov.au/consumers/travellers-entering.htm)

## **TAKING MEDICINES OUT OF AUSTRALIA**

You do not need a permit to leave with most prescription medicines even if they contain a controlled substance, providing the following conditions are met:

- you are departing Australia as a passenger on board a ship or aircraft
- the medicine is carried in your accompanied baggage
- you carry a letter or copy of your prescription (written in English) from your medical practitioner to certify that the medicine has been prescribed to you to treat a medical condition
- the quantity of the medicine does not exceed three months' supply.

Please note that the passenger exemption is not valid for all drugs and preparations.

Certain medicines taken out of Australia may be prohibited unless written authorisation is issued by the Office of Chemical Safety. This includes cannabis, and certain opioid medications such as fentanyl.

If you are an Australian resident, it is likely that all your medicines have been subsidised by the Australian Government under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

If you are taking subsidised personal medicines with you overseas you should download and complete a Medicine Export Declaration form that is available from the Department of Human Services' website. You should carry this form with the medicines in your accompanied baggage. The form and further information is available through:

[www.humanservices.gov.au/spw/customer/forms/resources/2619-1201en.pdf](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/spw/customer/forms/resources/2619-1201en.pdf)

Different countries have different controls on drugs and medicines so you should contact the embassy or consulate of your destination country to find out if you need permission to bring your medicine with you. You will need to find out about countries that you might be entering as a stop-over, as well as your final destination. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have a list of embassies and consulates - [www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html).

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT MEDICINES**

### **Getting prescription medicines while you are in Australia**

If you are in Australia for three months or longer and require ongoing medicines, ACBPS recommends that you visit an Australian medical practitioner to obtain your prescriptions. If you want to have your medicines sent to you from overseas, you will need to obtain an import permit from the relevant agency prior to import as the passenger exemption does not apply in this situation.

Check Australia's import procedures before you arrive: [www.customs.gov.au/site/page4226.asp](http://www.customs.gov.au/site/page4226.asp)

### **Biological materials and injections**

There are special requirements for importing injections containing material of human or animal origin (except insulin). Further information is available at [www.tga.gov.au/consumers/travellers-entering.htm#restrictions](http://www.tga.gov.au/consumers/travellers-entering.htm#restrictions). [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

Certain medicines containing biological materials or derived from biological materials may be prohibited from import without permission from the Department of Agriculture. Human and animal vaccines are examples of such products. For more information contact the Department of Agriculture on 1800 020 504, email: [biologicals@DAFF.gov.au](mailto:biologicals@DAFF.gov.au) or website: [www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au).

## **FIND OUT MORE**

The Department of Health has more information about taking medicines across Australia's borders: [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/general-guidance-for-travellers-bringing-medicines-to-and-from-australia](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/general-guidance-for-travellers-bringing-medicines-to-and-from-australia)