

Real-time prescription monitoring: a digital tool for clinical safety

Harms from high-risk prescription medicines, including deaths, are a significant public health issue in Australia. Real-time prescription monitoring (RTPM) is a nationally implemented digital tool which provides up-to-the-moment visibility of the prescribing and dispensing records for certain high-risk prescription medicines. Medicines that are captured in RTPM are often referred to as 'monitored medicines'.

RTPM systems support the quality use of medicines in Australia. They provide an opportunity for clinicians to identify and manage clinical risks associated with monitored medicines, engage patients in the clinical decision-making process, and ultimately reduce the likelihood of patient harm. RTPM is available in all Australian states and territories, however there are some differences in the lists of monitored medicines, and the circumstances that can trigger an alert or notification. An overview of the various RTPM systems and relevant contacts in each state or territory is available on the [Commission's website](#).

Benefits of RTPM

- An additional source of information about the use of monitored medicines to support clinical decision-making
- An opportunity to initiate discussions and provide consumer education at the point of prescribing or dispensing
- Supports early intervention to minimise harm to consumers and the community
- Provides details of the prescriber or dispensing pharmacy to enable more efficient contact between healthcare providers

Limitations of RTPM

- Pop-up notifications are only available when RTPM is integrated within the electronic prescribing or dispensing software
- Clinical information displayed in RTPM is not exhaustive and should be considered alongside other sources
- The absence of an alert or notification does not imply that risks are not present
- RTPM may not capture all instances of prescribing or dispensing (e.g. emergency supply by a pharmacist).

Clinical practice principles for prescribers and pharmacists using RTPM

- 1 Comply with professional obligations and relevant state or territory legislation when prescribing or dispensing monitored medicines.
- 2 Understand the role of RTPM as a source of information to support risk identification and not to replace clinical judgement.
- 3 Be familiar with the risks of harm to patients and the community from inappropriate use of monitored medicines.
- 4 View the full patient record in RTPM before prescribing or dispensing a monitored medicine.
- 5 Maintain accurate and up-to-date patient details in all administrative and clinical records.
- 6 Understand the available risk mitigation strategies, support services and referral pathways appropriate to the monitored medicine.
- 7 Recognise the signs and behaviours that may indicate unsafe use of monitored medicines.
- 8 Refer to the latest clinical evidence to support the initiation, continuation and/or deprescribing of monitored medicines.
- 9 Understand the circumstances that may trigger an alert or notification in the relevant RTPM system.
- 10 Follow a risk management process when responding to or interpreting data within RTPM. This includes consideration of the patient's broader psychosocial context.
- 11 Refer to the [Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine \(AChAM\)](#) recommendations for providing quality care to individuals with a substance use disorder.
- 12 Know where to report concerns about potentially harmful use, prescribing or supply of monitored medicines.

This fact sheet has been developed to align with all Australian state and territory RTPM systems, including:

SafeScript NSW



More information

For more information on RTPM, please visit the [Commission's webpage](#).

