

# Oral opioid medicine shortages

## What you need to know?

- Australia is experiencing shortages of many oral opioid medicine products, with some no longer made
- Different brands of oral opioid medicines may be used during this time
- Different brands or products may have different storage needs and expiry dates
- During the shortage, healthcare providers may:
  - Change your opioid medicine dose, depending on what strength is available.
  - Talk to you about your opioid medicine by ingredient name, to help reduce any confusion, and the risk of taking the wrong dose.
  - Change your opioid medicine to reduce disruption to your treatment, which may include weaning and possible cessation of your opioid medicine.
- Always check with your healthcare provider if you are unsure about your medicines.

## Why might you need oral opioid medicines?

Oral opioid medicines are taken by mouth to:

- Manage severe pain (short-term and long-term pain)
- Reduce breathing problems for people receiving specialist care, including cancer treatment and end-of-life care.



## What is happening?

There is currently a shortage of oral opioid medicines in Australia, with some no longer made.

Healthcare providers have plans in place to make sure patients who need oral opioid medicines are kept safe during the shortage and have access to different medicines.

You may notice some differences in the way opioid medicines are used:

- Different brands may be prescribed and given to you
- Different products may cost more or less than you paid before
- They may look different to what you are used to seeing
- They may need to be stored differently and have different expiry dates.



## Further information

Talk to your healthcare provider if you have concerns about how the shortage might affect you. For more information, please visit: [TGA website](https://www.tga.gov.au).

[safetyandquality.gov.au](https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au)



© Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care 2024