

## Compounded medicines – information you need to know

Compounded medicines are different to other medicines that you may usually receive from a pharmacy. They are made in a different way to commercially produced medicines.

This factsheet goes through some of these differences, but remember to always go to your registered health professional with any questions you might have about your own health or medical conditions.

### What is compounding?

Compounding is when a pharmacist makes a medicine to meet the unique needs of a patient (either human or animal) when available medicines do not meet those needs.

### How can I get a compounded medicine?

A pharmacist might compound a medicine if:

- you have an allergy to an ingredient in the available medicines
- the medicine you need is not available or no longer made
- you need the medicine in a different form to what is available, for example if you need a liquid instead of a tablet.

Before compounding a medicine for you, a pharmacist must receive:

- a prescription from a doctor or other health practitioner who can write a prescription (the prescriber)
- a request from you or a person asking on your behalf, for a medicine that does not require a prescription
- an instruction from a veterinarian if you need the medicine for an animal patient.

In each of these situations the pharmacist needs to make sure it is appropriate and safe to compound and supply the medicine. If an alternative option is more appropriate, the pharmacist will discuss this with you and the prescriber.

Your pharmacist may need to ask you for information about your health and any other medicines you take, to make sure the compounded medicine will be safe for you. The pharmacist may also need to talk to the prescriber about other options or to confirm information to help get an appropriate outcome for you.

### When can't a pharmacist compound a medicine?

A pharmacist cannot compound a medicine if:

- it would be the same as a medicine that already exists and is available to you, even if the compounded medicine would be cheaper
- the pharmacy does not have the right equipment to compound the medicine safely
- there is no evidence that it is a safe and appropriate treatment for you.

You might need to go to another pharmacy if your pharmacist does not have the special skills, education, training, ingredients or equipment to safely compound the medicine.

### How are compounded medicines different to other medicines?

Most medicines go through an approval process to ensure they are safe, effective and high quality before they can be supplied in Australia.

A compounded medicine, which is prepared by a pharmacist to meet the unique needs of a patient, does not go through this approval process, but it still must be of good quality and safe.

Before compounding a medicine for you, your pharmacist needs to make sure that the ingredients and procedure for making it will produce a safe medicine. If not, the pharmacist may discuss other suitable options with you and the prescriber.

### **Are all pharmacists able to compound medicines?**

After completing their qualification and training, pharmacists are competent to compound some medicines. Other medicines are more complex, requiring pharmacists to complete further education and training to compound safely.

You should ask your pharmacist if they have completed the necessary education and training and have the recent experience needed to safely compound your medicine.

### **Can I choose where to get my compounded medicine?**

You can choose which pharmacy you get your compounded medicine from, but not all pharmacies may be able to compound and supply the medicine.

### **What can I expect from my pharmacist when I get my compounded medicine?**

Before compounding your medicine, the pharmacist may need to ask you questions to make sure that a compounded medicine is the right option for you.

Your pharmacist should give you:

- an explanation of why a compounded product is being supplied and how it is different to other medicines
- instructions on using the medicine
- the expiry date of the medicine and information on storage
- advice on the possible side effects of the medicine, how to manage them and who you should tell about them
- advice on any situations where you shouldn't use the medicine, and
- any other specific information that helps you use the medicine safely and effectively.

Ask your pharmacist if you need more information about the ingredients of the compounded medicine, for example if you have an allergy or sensitivity, or to confirm if the medicine can be used if you play competitive sports.

If the compounded medicine is for an animal patient, information will also be provided to you by your vet.

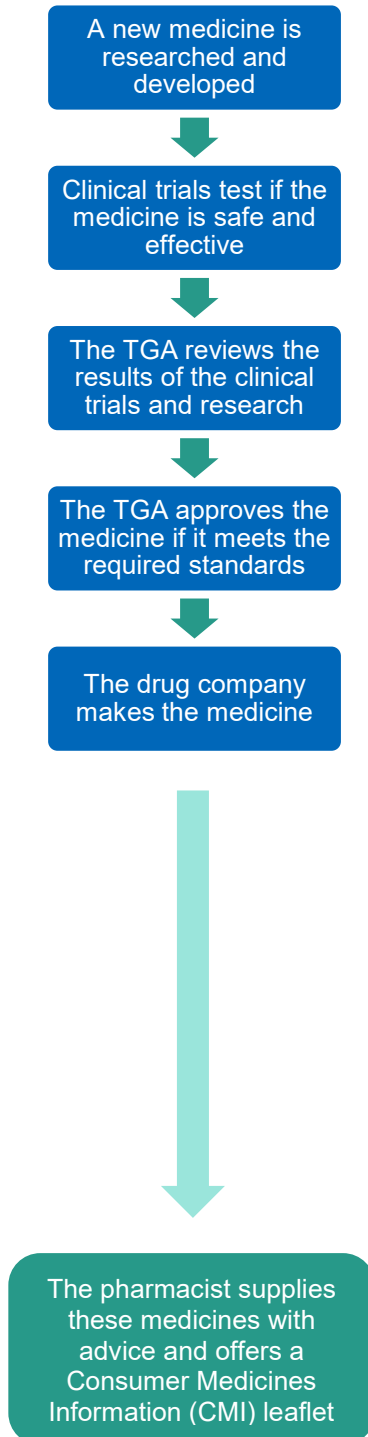
### **When should I talk to my health practitioner/s?**

Talk to your pharmacist and the prescriber if you have any questions about your medicine including:

- how to use it
- its safety
- why a compounded medicine is appropriate
- if you are having side effects
- what to do if the medicine is not working.

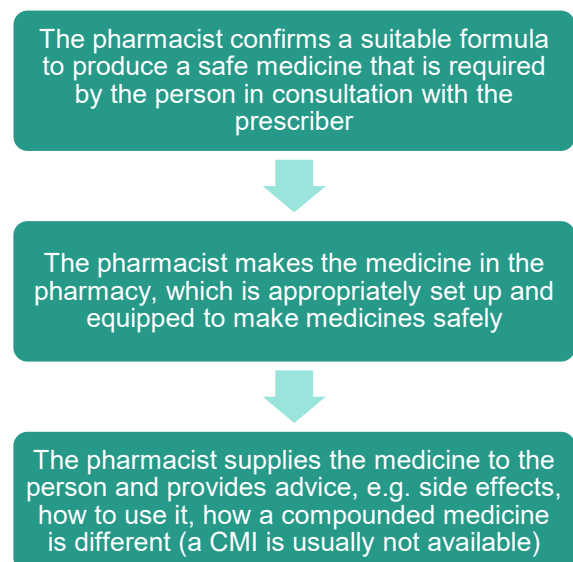
## How most medicines for humans are made

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approves medicines for supply in Australia. For more information on the TGA and how medicines are regulated in Australia visit the [TGA Consumer information and education webpage](#).



For animal medicines, a similar process is followed with review and registration by the [Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority \(APVMA\)](#).

## How medicines are compounded and supplied by pharmacists



The Pharmacy Board of Australia has published [Guidelines on compounding of medicines](#) which aim to inform pharmacists and the community about the Board's expectations of pharmacists in relation to compounding medicines.