

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE PRACTICE

Introduction

This quick reference guide has been developed by the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia (the Board) to remind Chinese medicine practitioners of the key aspects of this important guideline on Chinese herbal medicine practice.

Chinese medicine practitioners are required to be familiar with the full *Guidelines for safe Chinese herbal medicine practice* available at www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines/Guidelines-for-safe-practice.

1. Herbal nomenclature

Herbs used in Chinese herbal medicine are known by various names. Chinese medicine practitioners need to use the authorised **pin yin** name, with or without the addition of other nomenclature such as Chinese characters. The use of **pin yin** makes it clear to all and is concise and easy to apply. The herb name in Chinese characters corresponds to the herb name in **pin yin**.

To help Chinese medicine practitioners, other members of the healthcare team and patients, the Board has published a Nomenclature compendium of commonly used Chinese herbal medicines at www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines/Guidelines-for-safe-practice.

2. Prescription requirements¹

Prescriptions are to be printed or hand-written clearly and legibly, in plain English.

2.1 Information on prescriptions for raw herbs and herbal extracts

Information to include:

- name of patient
- name; registration number and contact telephone number of prescriber
- date prescribed
- names of all herbs in **pin yin** and amounts of each herb
- form of processing

¹ All information can also be provided in another language if needed.

- directions for use
- number of packets where relevant
- specific warnings where relevant
- expiry date of the prescription (i.e. date 'not to be dispensed after'), and
- prescriber signature.

2.2 Information on prescriptions for manufactured herbal medicines

Information to include:

- name of patient
- name; registration number and contact telephone number of prescriber
- date prescribed
- name of medication: **pin yin** or English name (and other as appropriate)
- dosage if different from the standard label
- duration of consumption
- specific warnings if relevant
- expiry date of the prescription (i.e. date 'not to be dispensed after'), and
- prescriber signature.

3. Labelling requirements for dispensed medicines²

3.1 Raw herbs

Labels to be in English with individual herbs in **pin yin**.

Information to include:

- name of patient
- names of the herbs in **pin yin** and amounts of each herb
- date dispensed
- name and contact number of the dispenser
- name of the prescriber if different to the dispenser
- specific directions for use, and
- specific warnings where relevant.

It is acceptable for the label to be a copy of the prescription, provided all the required information is included.

Label can be on the outer pack; however, each inner pack is to have either same or at least the name of patient and the dispensing date.

² All information can also be provided in another language if needed.

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – GUIDELINES FOR SAFE CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE PRACTICE

Instructions for preparing and/or cooking are to be in English or in the patient's language; cooking instructions can be on a separate sheet of paper, on the prescription, or on the label

3.2 Herbal extracts

Labels to be in English with individual herbs in *pin yin*.

Information to include:

- name of patient
- names of the herbs in *pin yin* and amounts of each herb
- date dispensed
- concentration ratio of the extract
- name and contact number of the dispenser
- name of the prescriber if different to the dispenser, and
- specific warnings and directions for use.

3.3 Manufactured herbal medicines (unmodified)

Medicine to keep the original label unobscured.

Must be either listed or registered on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG) www.tga.gov.au/australian-register-therapeutic-goods.

3.4 Repackaging manufactured herbal medicines

Repackaging is strongly discouraged. Manufactured herbal medicines should be supplied with the original packaging intact. Expectations about the occasional valid dispensing of a small quantity for a specific patient are described in Appendix 6 of the guidelines.

4. Patient information requirements

Practitioners are to provide enough information about medicines to comply with the requirements for informed consent.

If the patient requests it, a copy of the prescription is to be provided.

The prescriber is to inform patients that unexpected symptoms can occur, and what to do if they are concerned about a potential adverse reaction.

5. Patient health records

Clear and complete information about each prescription of herbs is to be recorded for every consultation.

When the dispensary service is independent of the prescribing practitioner, the dispenser needs to keep accurate records of the herbs dispensed.

For the retention of records and other relevant matters, practitioners must comply with their state and territory laws.

6. Compounding and dispensing

Independent dispensers are:

- to exercise judgment to make sure medicine conforms to the prescriber's requirements:
 - only provide the number of repeats specified on the prescription, no more
 - do not dispense an undated or an expired prescription or any prescription which does not meet the prescription requirements, and
- to provide clear written instructions to the patient on usage of the medicine including any warnings.

7. Managing potential conflicts of interest

As practitioners are often both the prescriber and the dispenser, they are to ensure that the decision to prescribe and supply a medicine is always in the best interest of their patient.

8. Management and operation of a Chinese herbal dispensary

Appendix 4 of the guidelines provides detailed guidance about this.

9. Adverse event reporting

Appendix 7 of the guidelines provides guidance about this.

Chinese medicine practitioners have a professional responsibility to report actual or suspected adverse events.

Patients or any member of the public may also report adverse events online to the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

For further information about reporting an adverse event see: www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems.

Date of effect of Guidelines for safe Chinese herbal medicine practice: 12 November 2017