

# SafeScript

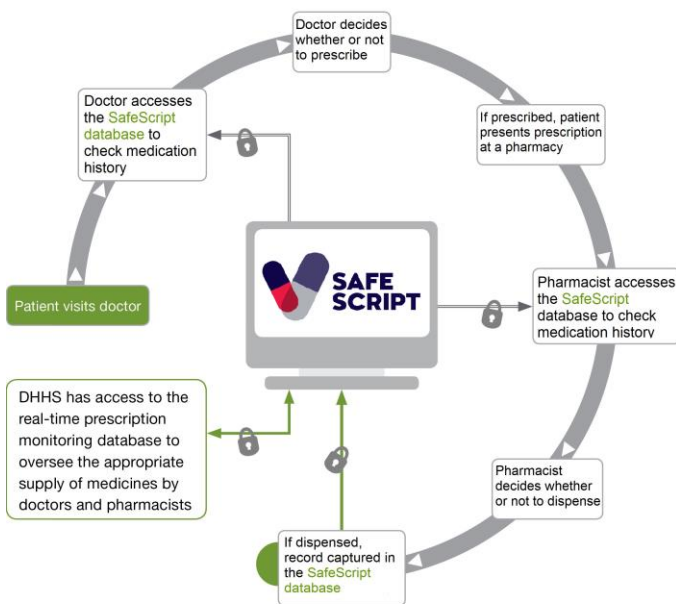
## Frequently Asked Questions – for health professionals

**Q: What is this initiative about?**

A: The Victorian Government is taking action to reduce the growing harms, including deaths, from high-risk prescription medicines by implementing SafeScript, Victoria’s real-time prescription monitoring system.

**Q: What is SafeScript?**

A: SafeScript is computer software that allows pharmacy dispensing records for certain medicines to be transmitted in real-time to a centralised database which can then be accessed by doctors and pharmacists during a consultation.



**SafeScript data security**  
 Only users with the right security credentials in GP clinics or pharmacies can access the SafeScript database. Patient searches by GPs and pharmacies are logged and can be audited to monitor phishing or inappropriate use.

SafeScript will provide prescribers and pharmacists with a clinical tool to make safer decisions about whether to prescribe or dispense a high-risk medicine, and facilitate the early identification, treatment and support for patients who are developing signs of dependence.

**Q: When will SafeScript be implemented?**

A: SafeScript Implementation is scheduled to commence in October 2018 with a focus on the Western Victoria Primary Health Network catchment before roll out to the rest of Victoria in early 2019.

**Q: Why is SafeScript necessary?**

A: The harms and increasing number of deaths from prescription medicines are a major public health concern.

Deaths in Victoria	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pharmaceutical medicines	303	312	316	356	381	414
Illicit drugs	130	163	164	227	263	271
Road toll	282	243	248	252	290	258

In 2017 there were 414 Victorian drug overdose deaths involving pharmaceutical medicines, higher than the number of overdose deaths involving illicit drugs (271), and higher than the road toll (258). In the latest Ambulance Victoria data (2016-17), there were more ambulance callouts for use of pharmaceutical medicines (10,517) than for illicit drugs (11,097).

**Q: What medicines will be monitored in SafeScript?**

A: Based on the latest international and local research and recommendations from an expert advisory group, the system will monitor prescription medicines that are causing the greatest harm to the Victorian community.

These include all Schedule 8 medicines, such as oxycodone (brand names include OxyContin and Endone), morphine (brand names include Kapanol and MS Contin), alprazolam (brand names include Xanax and Kalma), methylphenidate (brand names include Ritalin) and dexamphetamine and some Schedule 4 medicines including all benzodiazepines such as diazepam, ‘Z-drugs’ such as zolpidem, quetiapine and codeine.



**Q: How will information be entered into SafeScript?**

A: The data required for SafeScript will be collected automatically from Prescription Exchange Services (PES) which currently support the electronic transfer of prescriptions from medical clinics to pharmacies.

When a prescription is issued at a medical clinic or dispensed at a pharmacy, the PES will send a record of the prescription in real-time to SafeScript. No additional data entry will be necessary to record a prescription in SafeScript.

**Q: How do I view records from my medical clinic or pharmacy?**

A: SafeScript will be quick and easy-to-use with minimal interruption to clinical workflow so that patient care remains the key focus.

Clinicians will receive pop-up notifications from their desktops within seconds when a prescription has been issued or dispensed which will prompt clinicians if a review of the records in SafeScript is necessary. The notification will also provide a direct link to the patient's record.

**Q: Will SafeScript decide whether I can or cannot prescribe or dispense a medicine?**

A: SafeScript is a clinical support tool which will enable clinicians to make more informed decisions. SafeScript will assist clinicians with identifying high-risk circumstances, however, it will not prevent clinicians from prescribing or dispensing a medicine if they consider it to be clinically necessary. The appropriateness of prescribing or dispensing a medicine remains a clinical decision for the doctor and pharmacist.

**Q: Will the use of SafeScript be mandatory?**

A: After an 18 month introductory period to allow health practitioners to familiarise themselves with the system, it will be mandatory to check SafeScript prior to writing or dispensing a prescription for a high-risk medicine.

This follows worldwide best practice, as mandatory systems adopted in other countries have shown to provide greater reduction in harms from high-risk prescription medicines.

There will be exceptions in some circumstances, including when treating patients in hospitals, prisons, police gaols, aged care and palliative care.

**Q: What support will be provided to patients and health professionals for the implementation of SafeScript?**

A: SafeScript will be accompanied by a range of initiatives to support and prepare patients and health professionals for the implementation of SafeScript.

These will include:

- a public awareness campaign to prepare the general public, including consumers and families, for SafeScript and improve understanding of the risks associated with some prescription medicines
- training for prescribers and pharmacists, on how to more safely prescribe and dispense and respond to the needs of patient, being delivered by a consortium comprising all Victorian Primary Health Networks and NPS MedicineWise
- additional peer to peer support for General Practitioners
- some minor enhancements to the alcohol and other drug treatment system.

**Q: How will this initiative impact current arrangements for prescribing and dispensing for these medicines in Victoria?**

A: As part of the implementation of SafeScript, the arrangements for treatment permits for prescribing Schedule 8 medicines will be comprehensively reviewed and streamlined.

An expert advisory group will provide input to determine how best to streamline the Schedule 8 permit system.

**Q: Why can't the myHealth Record be used for real-time prescription monitoring?**

A: The myHealth Record is a patient-controlled summary of a patient's health record, in which patients can choose what is included and who can view their medication history.

SafeScript is different because it will allow doctors and pharmacists involved in a patient's care access to a complete record of high-risk medicines that have been supplied. Patients will not be able to opt-out or restrict what medication history can be viewed.

**Q: Where can I get further information?**

A: Further information is available on the [SafeScript website](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript) at <www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript>.

The [SafeScript General Enquiries](#) team can be contacted on 9096 5633 or via email <safescript@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.