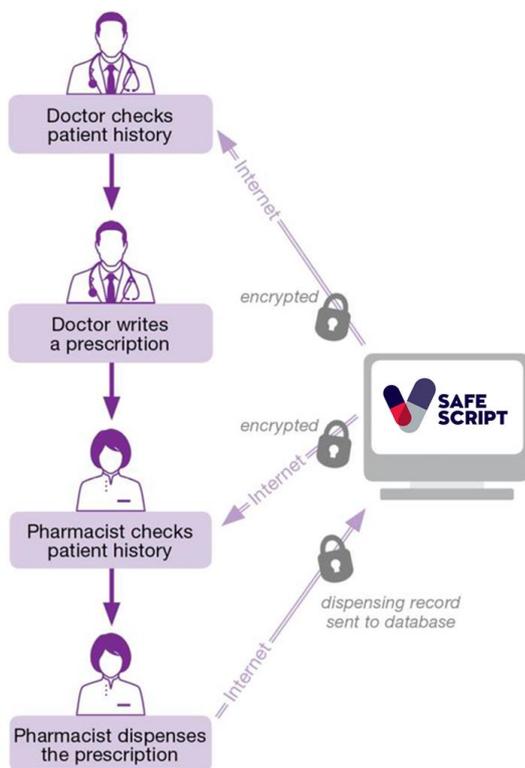


SafeScript: Frequently Asked Questions

Information for patients

What is SafeScript?

SafeScript is computer software that allows prescription records for certain high-risk medicines to be transmitted in real-time to a centralised database which can then be accessed by doctors (or nurse practitioners) and pharmacists during a consultation with a patient.



SafeScript provides information to enable doctors and pharmacists to make safer clinical decisions and identify circumstances where patients are receiving potentially harmful medicines beyond medical need.

Why is SafeScript being implemented?

The increasing harms from certain high-risk prescription medicines such as opioids and benzodiazepines is a major public health concern.

Individuals can develop dependence on these medicines, even when they are taken short-term for conditions like pain or anxiety.

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).

What medicines are included in SafeScript?

Prescription medicines that are causing the greatest harm to the Victorian community are monitored through SafeScript.

These medicines have been recommended based on the latest international and local research and include:

- strong prescription painkillers such as morphine (brand names include Kapanol) and oxycodone (brand names include OxyContin and Endone)
- all benzodiazepines (brand names include Valium)
- zolpidem or zopiclone sleeping tablets (brand names include Stilnox and Imovane)
- quetiapine (brand names include Seroquel)
- codeine-containing prescription painkillers (brand names include Panadeine Forte)

What information is recorded in SafeScript?

Existing information which is already recorded by pharmacies when a prescription is dispensed is recorded in SafeScript. This information includes: patient name, address, details of medicines supplied (name, strength and quantity), and doctor and pharmacy details.

Who has access to the system?

Doctors, nurse practitioners and pharmacists who are involved in your care may view your prescription history in SafeScript to ensure the supply of prescription medicines is safe for you.

Authorised Department of Health and Human Services officers also access SafeScript as part of their regulatory role in ensuring the safe supply of medicines in the community.

Will this system prevent me from receiving my regular medicines?

SafeScript does not instruct or make a decision for your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist on whether you should be prescribed or supplied with a prescription medicine.

SafeScript provides doctors, nurse practitioners and pharmacists with additional information about your medication history to assist with safer clinical decisions being made by your health professional about your medical care.

If you have been receiving the same prescription medicines, or unsafe combinations, from more than one prescriber without each knowing, your prescriber may consider some changes for your safety. This might include tapering of doses or recommending alternative approaches to managing issues such as pain, anxiety or insomnia.

As part of the roll out of SafeScript, doctors and pharmacists are provided with comprehensive training on how to more safely prescribe and dispense and respectfully respond to the needs of patients. This training will give your doctor and pharmacist the confidence and skills to continue to provide you with the safest and most appropriate level of ongoing care.

Does my doctor or pharmacist need my permission to access my record in SafeScript?

Doctors, nurse practitioners and pharmacists who are involved in your care are authorised under law to access your record in SafeScript, without your express permission, for the purposes of ensuring your safety when prescribing or dispensing high-risk prescription medicines.

How will my privacy be protected?

There are offences and strict penalties under the *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981* for improper or unauthorised use of SafeScript.

A log will be created each time your record is viewed in SafeScript and this will be monitored by the Department of Health and Human Services. If inappropriate use is detected, health professionals may face penalties under Victorian law and the matter may be referred to the Medical or Pharmacy Board for investigation and possible disciplinary action.

Health professionals must always adhere to privacy requirements set out in the *Health Records Act 2001* and *Privacy Act 1988* when handling your health information. The Health Privacy Principles and Australian Privacy Principles specify the circumstances

where health professionals can access, collect, use or disclose your health information.

Further information about how your privacy and data are protected is available in a separate FAQ found on the [SafeScript website](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript) <www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript>.

If you have a concern about the way a health professional has handled your information, you may contact the [Health Complaints Commissioner](https://hcc.vic.gov.au/make-complaint) <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/make-complaint> on 1300 582 113

Can I opt-out of the system?

SafeScript is not an opt-out system.

Currently, when a prescription medicine is supplied, the law already requires pharmacists to record the details of the prescription. The law now also requires these records to be provided into SafeScript.

The collection of prescription records by SafeScript is necessary to provide doctors and pharmacists with access to a complete record of supply to ensure patients do not receive more medicines than is medically needed.

Is SafeScript the same as the myHealth Record?

SafeScript and myHealth Record are not the same.

MyHealth Record is a patient-controlled summary of your health records, in which you can choose what is included and who can view your medication history.

As it is important for your safety that doctors, nurse practitioners and pharmacists involved in your care have a complete record of high-risk medicines that have been supplied to you, SafeScript is not be an opt-out system.

SafeScript is a system independent of myHealth Record.

When will SafeScript be implemented?

SafeScript commenced implementation in October 2018, with a focus on the Western Victoria Primary Health Network catchment. The focus of implementation shifts to the rest of Victoria in early 2019.

Where can I get further information?

Further information is available on the [SafeScript page](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript) of the Department of Health and Human Services website <www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript>.

You can contact the [SafeScript General Enquiries Team](mailto:safescript@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <safescript@dhhs.vic.gov.au> via email or on 9096 5633.

If you or someone you care about has a problem with prescription medicines, the SafeScript Pharmaceutical Helpline may assist with counselling, information and referral to treatment and support services.

The SafeScript Pharmaceutical Helpline is a free and confidential 24-hour telephone counselling service: 1800 737 233