



## Exempted Codeine Products – Information for the Consumer

### A. What are Exempted Codeine Products?

Products which contain codeine and can be purchased without a prescription:

- Tablets: contain **not** more than 8mg of codeine phosphate per tablet
- Liquids: contain **not** more than 20mg of codeine phosphate per 30ml

These products must also contain two or three additional medical ingredients: many products contain acetaminophen **or** ASA and caffeine.

### B. What are the regulations for purchasing Exempted Codeine Products?

**Size restriction:** maximum of fifty (50) dosage units in a solid dosage form (tablets, capsules) or 100ml of a liquid form can be sold to an individual at one time.

**Who can sell Exempted Codeine Products:** only a pharmacist or a pharmacist intern under the direct supervision of a pharmacist.

**What will be recorded when you purchase an Exempted Codeine Product:** on your personal Pharmaceutical Information Program (PIP) profile, the pharmacist will document:

- Date of purchase
- Product name
- Quantity sold

*Your PIP profile is accessible by your Saskatchewan Health Number or your name.*

**Your responsibilities when purchasing an Exempted Codeine Product:** tell the pharmacist or pharmacist intern what you are using it for **and** the date you last purchased an Exempted Codeine Product.

**Products containing codeine are not recommended for children less than 12 years of age.**

### C. What will your pharmacist discuss with you when you purchase an Exempted Codeine Product?

1. Ensure that it is being used for a recognized medical or dental purpose
  - Relief of short term mild to moderate pain
  - Cough suppressant
2. The proper dosing of the product for the specific purpose
  - Pain Relief: Usually 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours
  - Cough Suppressant: Usually 15ml every 6-8 hours or 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours

Table 1: Maximum Daily Dose

<b>Ingredient</b>	<b>Daily Maximum</b>
Codeine	360mg
Acetaminophen	4000mg
ASA	4000mg
Caffeine	2500mg

3. Side effects

Table 2: Side Effects of Specific Ingredients

<b>Ingredient</b>	<b>Side Effects</b>
Codeine	Constipation Decreased mental alertness Decreased breathing rate Decreased blood pressure
Acetaminophen	Allergic reaction, rash
ASA	Dizziness and fatigue Heartburn, nausea, stomach pain Bleeding
Caffeine	Increased heart rate Dizziness, headache, insomnia, restlessness Increased urinary frequency

4. The risks of over-use of the ingredients in the Exempted Codeine Products:
- Medication Overuse Headache: use of combination analgesic products (including Exempted Codeine Products) on 10 days a month or more can result in worsening of a pre-existing headache disorder
  - Inappropriate Use: addiction (codeine); liver damage (acetaminophen)

**Health Canada is considering dramatically reducing the daily recommended dosage of acetaminophen from the current 4 (four) grams per day to 2.6 grams per day in light of growing concerns about liver damage resulting from accidental and intentional overdoses.**