



**COLLEGE OF
PHARMACISTS
OF MANITOBA**



**THE
COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS
& SURGEONS
OF MANITOBA**



**College of
Registered Nurses
of Manitoba**

Frequently Asked Questions: Changes to Tramadol Prescribing and Dispensing Resource for Patients and the Public

Why are the prescribing and dispensing rules for tramadol changing?

Tramadol is an opioid that is prescribed to treat pain. Health Canada looked at the risks and benefits of tramadol use and found that, like other opioids prescribed to treat pain, chronic use of tramadol can lead to the development of tolerance and dependence. Long-term tramadol use is also associated with a risk of developing serious complications such as opioid use disorder (opioid addiction), respiratory depression, and death. Because of the risk to human and public health, Health Canada will now more tightly control tramadol by including it under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) and the Narcotic Control Regulations (NCR), to lessen the impact of the opioid crisis.

When Health Canada makes changes to federal legislation like the CDSA and NCR, provincial health profession regulators may also need to change their policies that guide the practice of healthcare professionals in their provinces. This is the case for tramadol in Manitoba.

The College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (CPhM) and The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba (CPSM) have made changes to tramadol prescribing and dispensing rules to protect public and patient safety. These changes mean that tramadol will be treated like other opioids and controlled drugs.

The federal and provincial changes to tramadol will also impact the practice of RN (Nurse Practitioners), dentists, and veterinarians.

Examples of tramadol products that will be affected include (but is not limited to):

- all single entity tramadol products like Tridural® and Zytram®; and,
- all tramadol products combined with other non-opioid active ingredients, such as Tramacet®.

How will these changes affect prescriptions for tramadol?

As of March 31, 2022, tramadol will be treated like other opioids in all respects. This means:

- Your doctor, RN (nurse practitioner), dentist, or veterinarian must have the authority from their professional regulator to prescribe opioids and controlled drugs, such as tramadol products.
 - Physician Assistants or Clinical Assistants can no longer provide you with a prescription for tramadol products.
- Your doctor, RN (nurse practitioner), dentist, or veterinarian must write the prescription with a total quantity of medication and include the specific time intervals at which it can be filled.
 - As before, your doctor, RN (nurse practitioner), or veterinarian can only write a tramadol prescription for a maximum of a three-month supply, which can only be dispensed one-month at a time.
- If the prescriber hands you a prescription for tramadol, it will be written on an M3P form (also known as a “triplicate”), which must be given to your pharmacist within three days after the date it was prescribed. Your prescriber can also fax the prescription directly to the pharmacy of your choice, during the COVID-19 pandemic only. Verbal prescriptions are no longer allowed.
- You can no longer transfer tramadol prescriptions or any remaining refills on the prescription to another pharmacy. You will need a new prescription from your doctor, nurse practitioner, dentist, or veterinarian if you are attending a new pharmacy.

I already have a prescription for tramadol. How will it be affected?

If your prescription was written **BEFORE March 31, 2022, your pharmacy can provide you with only ONE additional refill for a maximum of a 1-month supply.** After that, you must talk with your prescriber to get a new prescription that follows the new rules.

For example, if you have a tramadol prescription written for 90 days (three months) and you have two refills left, your pharmacy can give you a maximum 1-month supply and the remaining refill will be invalid.

All prescriptions written by your prescriber **ON OR AFTER March 31, 2022, must follow the new rules.**

These new practices will mean that fewer pills are available in your home and within the community. When these measures are combined with storing medications in a lockbox or locked cabinet, it can reduce the risks associated with stolen, diverted, or misplaced medications, and overall reduce the risk of accidental overdose by adults or children.

If you have questions about your tramadol prescription, talk with your pharmacist, doctor, RN (nurse practitioner), or prescriber.



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