

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
P.O. BOX 5813,
WELLINGTON.

11 February 1959.

CLINICAL SERVICES LETTER No. 9

TO ALL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS:

Dear Sir/Madam,

EXTENDED SUPPLY PRESCRIPTIONS

Some doctors do not seem to be aware that they may endorse extended supply prescriptions with their own directions to the chemist about the mode of issue.

They may, for example, mark the prescription: "Issue fortnightly", or "All at once". If no special directions are given, extended supply prescriptions are dispensed in instalments of one month's supply at a time.

Quantity and Period of Supply

Confusion sometimes arises about the total quantity to be issued. In addition to the endorsement "Certified extended supply condition" the prescriber is expected to specify the period of supply. The chemist normally calculates from this statement and the doctor's directions to the patient, the total quantity to be issued. If, for example, the direction is "one tablet three daily" for a period of one month, he issues 90 tablets.

In some cases, however, the doctor does not intend his patient to have the full amount as calculated in this way. The direction may be "one at bedtime", but the patient knows he is not expected to take the medicine every night. A month's supply in such a case might be only 15 or 20 tablets. If, therefore, the prescriber specifies a definite quantity (e.g., "Mitte XX") then the chemist should proceed accordingly, and not on any calculation of his own.

Sometimes it is not clear whether the quantity stated by the prescriber means the total amount for the whole period (e.g., three months) or merely one month's supply. Normally, however, it means the total quantity, and the chemist should dispense the prescription on this assumption, unless the prescriber has made it clear that he means something else.

It should be noted that if the quantity issued were to exceed the amount required for the period in question (i.e., according to the directions to the patient) payment on the excess would be liable to be disallowed.

P.T.O.

Cooperation of Chemists

Copies of this letter are being issued to contracting chemists, as it is considered essential that the prescriber's directions should always be complied with, unless there seems to be an error in which case the chemist should confer with the doctor before dispensing the prescription. This is a recognised procedure, designed to protect the interests of all concerned.

Yours faithfully,

A. W. S. Thompson

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