

Changes for Hydrocodone Combinations

You will see big changes with medicines that have hydrocodone in them. Hydrocodone is most often used for treating pain. It's in pain medicines such as *Lortab*, *Norco*, and *Vicodin*. Hydrocodone can also be used for treating a cough. It's in cough medicines such as *Tussionex*.

Medicines with hydrocodone are moving from "Schedule III" to "Schedule II" under federal law. This means your pharmacist and prescriber will have to follow stricter rules for writing and filling your hydrocodone prescription. The reason for this move is to help improve safety with hydrocodone. It will happen on October 6, 2014.

Here are the main changes:

- **Prescriptions for medicines with hydrocodone will have to be written.** You'll need to get a paper prescription and take it to a pharmacy to get it filled. Or in some states your prescriber may be able to send the prescription by computer. **These prescriptions cannot be phoned or faxed** to your pharmacy in most cases.
- **Prescriptions for medicines with hydrocodone will not have refills.** If your prescription is written before October 6th you might be able to get your refills until April 8, 2015. But keep in mind that your pharmacy's computer system may not be able to process these refills after October 6th. If this is the case you will need a new prescription.
- **A physician assistant (PA) or nurse practitioner (NP) might not be able to write prescriptions for medicines with hydrocodone.** This will depend on the state you live in.

Talk to your prescriber **before October 6th**. He or she may write a prescription for your current medicine or switch you to a different medicine. Do this early to avoid problems when the rules for hydrocodone change.

Ask your pharmacist what else you will need to know. This may include how long prescriptions for hydrocodone are good or how many doses or days' supply you can get filled at one time. The rules may differ depending on your pharmacy and state.

[This handout may not cover all possible information. It does not replace the need for professional medical care. Always follow the instructions from your health care provider.] [September 2014]