

Controlled Substance Schedules: A Quick Reference

This handout provides a quick reference guide to the five Controlled Substance Schedules (CSS) as defined by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Veterinarians have a responsibility to dispense and administer controlled substances according to their designated schedule.

Establishing Controlled Substance Schedules

The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 (CSA) established the five schedules based on a drug's:

- Potential for abuse: This considers factors like how readily a drug can lead to dependence and psychological or physical addiction.
- Currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States: This considers the drug's therapeutic benefits and established use in veterinary medicine.

Changes Between Schedules: Prescribing, Record-Keeping, Storage

Federal regulations for controlled substances vary by schedule, with Schedule II's being the most secure

| Feature | Schedule II | Schedule III-V |
|-------------|---|---|
| Prescribing | Written prescriptions cannot be faxed, max of 30 days dispensed, no refills allowed | Faxing is allowed, up to a maximum of 5 refills allowed |
| Records | Require DEA 222 Forms, logbooks must be stored separate from Schedule III-V's | Schedules III-V's logbooks can be stored together or combined into a single logbook |
| Storage | Must be stored separately (separate shelf in safe or separate safe) | Can be stored together in single safe/shelf |



Identifying Controlled Substance Schedules

You can quickly find the Schedule on an inventory item by looking for the 'C' and roman numeral which identifies the schedule. This can be seen on the Butorphanol container and package above indicated by the red circles

State Control of Controlled Substances

In addition to the federal DEA scheduling system, some states have the authority to classify certain substances as controlled even if they are not listed by the DEA, or to place them in a different schedule than the federal classification. These are often referred to as state-controlled substances.

Veterinarians are required to comply with both federal and state regulations regarding controlled substances and always follow whichever regulation is most stringent.

Controlled Substance Schedules

| Schedule | Definition (Potential for Abuse & Accepted Medical Use) | Examples |
|--------------|---|--|
| Schedule I | High potential for abuse, no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States. | Heroin LSD MDMA |
| Schedule II | High potential for abuse, but has currently accepted medical use with severe restrictions. | Hydrocode Hydromorphone Fentanyl Sodium Pentobarbital |
| Schedule III | Potential for abuse less than Schedule I and II drugs and has accepted medical uses. | Buprenorphine Ketamine Tilzolan |
| Schedule IV | Low potential for abuse relative to drugs in Schedule III and has accepted medical uses. | Diazepam Butorphanol Midazolam Tramadol |
| Schedule V | Lower potential for abuse than Schedule IV and consists of preparations containing limited quantities of certain narcotics. | Diphenoxylate/Atropine |

*****It is important to stay up-to-date with the current DEA scheduling for specific medications. The DEA may reclassify a substance based on its potential for abuse and accepted medical use***
