



Issue: **Expired Stock**

Raised by: Various

Background: There are frequent questions from health centre staff asking what they should do with expired stock. There are also some conflicting opinions about the legitimacy of use of expired stock and a clear statement is required.

Discussion: There are two main categories of stock used in Remote Health that are subject to expiry dates and constitute the focus of this issue. They are clinical consumables and medications.

In all instances **Remote Health does not support the use of expired stock** beyond a manufacturer's nominated expiry date. Other factors may also affect expiry (e.g. heat affected medicines, packaging integrity etc) but are not considered in detail here.

A caveat exists in that important drugs or items that have expired but for which there is no immediate replacement available on site, should be kept until replacement is available. Where an expired drug/item is considered for use in an emergency, this must be assessed according to the situation. In the case of expired drugs being used, the ordering medical officer must be advised where relevant.

All expired medicines are otherwise to be disposed of via the [Return of Unwanted Medicines](#) program established in all Remote Health Centres, excepting [Schedule 8](#) and [Restricted S4](#) medicines which must be disposed of in the accountable processes described in the Atlas.

Other clinical consumables may be returned to the regional Professional Practice Nurse (PPN) who will assess the product against the following types of categories and make arrangements for:

- Use in training scenarios
- Distribution to veterinary practices
- Disposal (not safe for any other use)

Consultation: Remote Executive Leadership Group, Clinical Nurse Educators

References: Nil

Outcome: Expired stock should not be used except in emergencies where fresh stock is not available. Once replacement stock is on hand:

- Expired medications are returned via the relevant process (see above)
- Expired clinical consumables can be returned to the PPN (for use or disposal as described above)