

Korea Medication GUIDE

Bringing Prescription Medication to South Korea

Based on MFDS Official Guidelines and U.S. Embassy Guidance (May 2026)

Overview

South Korea's Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) requires all travelers — regardless of nationality — to obtain advance approval before entering Korea with controlled substances, including certain common prescription medications. Korean authorities regularly arrest and prosecute international travelers who carry these medications without prior approval, even with a valid U.S. or foreign prescription.

This guide covers what medications require a permit, what documents to prepare, how to apply, and important rules to follow.

⚠ WARNING

Korean authorities regularly arrest and prosecute international travelers carrying controlled medications — even with a valid foreign prescription.

Do not assume your prescription is sufficient. Advance MFDS approval is mandatory for the drug classes listed below.

All applications must be submitted at least 10 business days before your entry date.

Part 1: Know Your Medication Category

Your medication falls into one of two categories. The rules differ significantly between them.

Category A: Prohibited or Strictly Controlled (Requires MFDS Permit)

Drug Class	Examples	Status
Cannabis products	CBD oil, THC, hemp-derived products, vape pens	FULLY PROHIBITED — Do not bring under any circumstances
Amphetamines	Adderall, Dexedrine, Vyvanse	MFDS permit required before entry
Opiates	Hydrocodone, oxycodone, codeine, fentanyl	MFDS permit required before entry
Benzodiazepines	Xanax, Valium, Klonopin, Ativan	MFDS permit required before entry

Category B: Non-Controlled Medications (No Permit Needed)

Standard, non-controlled prescription medications may be brought in for personal use without an MFDS permit, subject to the following limits:

- Maximum quantity: 6 bottles or a 3-month (90-day) supply at the maximum prescribed dose — whichever is less.
- Carry original prescriptions and the medication in its original packaging.
- Bring a doctor's letter specifying your medical condition and listing the medications you are importing.
- Ask your doctor about substitute medications or local equivalents available in Korea.

Part 2: Important Rules for All Controlled Medications

- Only the person who will take the drug may obtain the permit. Permits are not issued for medications belonging to family members or friends.
- Medications must be carried in your hand luggage when entering Korea — do not pack in checked baggage.
- Never mail or post controlled medications into Korea. This is strictly prohibited and seized medications will be destroyed or returned.
- Do not carry more than the approved quantity. A small buffer of up to 5 extra days' dosage may be allowed for flight delays, but no more.
- If you will travel to other countries after leaving Korea, you may bring medication for those additional periods if you attach your e-tickets covering those trips.
- Medications for stays longer than 90 days must be prescribed locally in Korea.
- Applications and permits will be rejected if information is false or incomplete. A permit already issued can be revoked.
- Poppy seeds in food products (e.g., bagel seasoning blends) are also illegal in Korea and can result in criminal investigation, fines, entry/exit bans, or imprisonment.

Part 3: Required Documents

For Category A (controlled) medications, you must submit all of the following. Use English or Korean only. If your documents are in another language, a notarized translation is required — submit both the original and the translated version.

Document	What It Must Include	Notes
Form 1: Inbound Traveler's Permit Application	Applicant name, passport no., nationality, travel dates, flight info, visiting purpose, medication name & dosage, reason for carrying, contact details	Submit to MFDS by email or fax
Form 2: Narcotics Bring In Permit	Name, date of birth, address, purpose of drug use, drug name, quantity, handling period	Submit with Form 1
Full-size passport copy	Photo and passport number must be clearly visible	Required

Flight reservation ticket	Entry/departure dates, flight number, port of arrival, passenger name (e-ticket accepted)	Required
Medical certificate / doctor's letter	Hospital name, patient name, doctor's name & signature & date, diagnosis, drug trade name & generic name (active ingredient), dosage, daily dose, prescribed quantity, issue date	May be waived if drug export certificate is provided
Valid prescription	Patient info (name, DOB), issue date, generic name (active ingredient), dosage, prescribed quantity	May be waived if drug export certificate is provided
Drug export/import certificate (if available)	Issued by your home country's government; certifies you are bringing out narcotics for personal use	If unavailable in your country, check 'Not available' on Form 1
Long-stay reference document (if applicable)	e.g., student exchange certificate, business dispatch certificate	Required for study/business trips

Part 4: How to Apply for a Permit

Apply at least 10 business days before your entry date.
 Processing takes 10 business days. Late or incomplete applications may be rejected.
 Submit by email to narcotics@korea.kr or fax to +82-43-719-2800.
 You may also apply online at: <https://nedrug.mfds.go.kr/eng/index>

Option A: Apply by Email or Fax (Recommended for Non-Korean Speakers)

Step 1 — Download and Complete the Forms

You need two forms from the MFDS website:

- Form 1: Inbound Traveler's Permit for Narcotics Contained Medication for Personal Use
- Form 2: Narcotics Bring In Permit (Narcotics bring in permit application)

Step 2 — Complete Form 1

Fill in all fields carefully. Key sections:

- Sections 1-5: Your name, passport number, nationality, travel dates, and flight details.
- Section 6: Visiting purpose (business, study, sightseeing, etc.). Long-stay visitors (study/business) must attach a reference document such as a dispatch certificate or enrollment letter.

- Section 7: Medication name (trade name and active ingredient) and daily dosage. Use the format: [Drug name] ([ingredient]) [dose per tablet] ([total mg/day]). Example: Adderall XR (amphetamine/dextroamphetamine) 10mg tab. (30mg/day).
- Section 7 also: Indicate whether your home country issues a drug export certificate. If not, check 'Not available.'
- Section 8: Reason for carrying / name of illness (e.g., ADHD, chronic pain, anxiety).
- Section 9: Full contact details — phone, email, fax. Do not leave any field blank.
- Section 10: Sign and date the declaration.

Step 3 — Complete Form 2

Fill in the starred (*) fields:

- Your full name, date of birth, and home address.
- Purpose of drug use (brief description of your condition and why you need the medication).
- Drug name and quantity: Use the trade name, active ingredient, dose per unit, and form (e.g., Adderall XR (amphetamine, dextroamphetamine) 10mg tablet — 30 tablets). This should reflect the total amount you will consume in Korea. If you visit other countries after Korea, include those extra days' supply and attach your e-tickets.
- Handling period: The number of days you will be in Korea (plus extra days for post-Korea travel if applicable).
- Sign both the applicant declaration and the administrative information consent at the bottom.

Step 4 — Gather Supporting Documents

Compile all documents listed in Part 3 of this guide. Ensure your doctor's letter and prescription contain all required information — incomplete documents are a common reason for rejection.

Step 5 — Submit

Send everything to:

- Email: narcotics@korea.kr
- Fax: +82-43-719-2800

Address your submission to the Narcotics Policy Division, Pharmaceutical Safety Bureau, Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS).

Step 6 — Monitor and Respond

Processing takes up to 10 business days. If the MFDS requests additional or supplementary documents, respond promptly — delays may result in your application being rejected.

Option B: Apply Online

The MFDS online portal (<https://nedrug.mfds.go.kr/eng/index>) allows you to complete and submit the application digitally. Steps:

1. Go to the English portal and click 'Permit To Bring In Narcotics For Self-treatment.'
2. First-time users: Complete email verification, agree to the personal information terms, complete the CAPTCHA, and set a password (8-16 characters including uppercase, lowercase, numbers, and special characters).

3. Log in with your email and password.
4. Click 'New Application' and fill in all required fields (same information as Forms 1 and 2 above).
5. Upload all required supporting documents.
6. Click 'Submit Application' to finalize. You can save a draft at any time using 'Save Temporary.'
7. Log back in to monitor your application status. If a 'Supplementary' status appears, upload the requested documents promptly.

Part 5: After You Receive the Permit

- Print and carry your permit with you at all times during travel.
- Present the permit to Korean customs officials on arrival if asked.
- Do not carry more than the approved quantity. Korean customs makes the final determination on items allowed into the country.
- The Korean Customs Service at Incheon Airport has final authority over what is permitted entry.

Part 6: If You Cannot Obtain a Permit

If you are not eligible for a permit, or plan to stay longer than 3 months, talk to your doctor about:

- Seeking alternative medications that are not controlled under Korean law.
- Obtaining a Korean prescription for a local equivalent after arrival.

Do not attempt to bring controlled medications without a permit. The legal and personal consequences — including arrest, deportation, and criminal prosecution — are severe.

Key Contacts & Resources

Resource	Details
MFDS English portal	https://nedrug.mfds.go.kr/eng/index
MFDS narcotics email	narcotics@korea.kr
MFDS fax	+82-43-719-2800
Korean Customs Service	https://www.customs.go.kr
Korea Food Safety portal	https://www.foodsafetykorea.go.kr
U.S. Embassy Seoul	https://kr.usembassy.gov

Disclaimer

Regulations are subject to change without notice. All staff should verify current requirements with the MFDS or the Korean embassy before each trip. This guide reflects guidance current as of May 2026. AI generates the draft; you provide the craft — all content must be reviewed before use.

Example for Completing

Inbound Traveler's Permit for Narcotics Contained Medication for Personal Use

자가치료용 마약류 반입 승인서

1. Applicant's Name (신청인 이름)

Given name(이름): Micheal Surname(성): Smith

2. Passport No. (여권번호)

 AB12345678

3. Nationality(국적)

 Republic of Korea

4. Length of Stay Abroad(체류기간)

 11 M(월) 11 D(일) 2018 Y(년) ~ 11 M(월) 20 D(일) 2018 Y(년)

(Total(총) 10 days(일))

*** The dates will be for the period staying in Korea. If you will trip after departing from Korea, please put the information on the space of this number.**

5. Name of Entry and Flight No. (입국 장소 및 항공편)

Port of arrival(도착장소(공항, 항구)): ICN (Incheon) Flight No.(항공편): KE 1011

6. Visiting Purpose(방문목적)(√)

Business(업무) Family/friends visit(가족/지인 방문) Study(학업)

Sightseeing(관광) Stopover(경유) Other(기타) _____

***Reference attached? (참고문서 첨부 유무) (study visitors only 학업상 방문일 경우)**

Yes(はい) No(いいえ)

7. Identification of Carrying Narcotics and Quantities (반입 마약류 및 복용량)

Medication (ingredient) name and quantities (약품명(주성분) 및 복용량) *30mg/day=10mg/ tablet x 3
 tablets/day

약품명 (주성분)

1 일 복용량

Drug (Ingredient) name: **Adderall XR (amphetamine/dextroamphetamine) 10mg tab.** (**30**_ mg /day)

Drug name: _____ (_____ mg / day)

Drug name: _____ (_____ mg / day)

Drug name: _____ (_____ mg / day)

***Is export certificate on narcotic drug or psychoactive substance available in your country?**

귀국에서 마약류에 대한 반출 승인서를 발급하고 있습니까?

Available (발급한다) Not available (발급하지 않는다)

*** Check at the correct box based on the regulation of your country.**

8. Reason of Carrying Medicine / Name of Illness (약품 반입 사유/병명)

_ Symptoms to treat with the medication applied. (e.g. Chronic pain, anxiety, sleep disorder, etc.)_

9. Contact Details (연락처)

*** Do not leave any blank (모두 기입하십시오.)**

Phone No. (전화번호): +11(country code)-111-1111

E-mail: example@forKorea.com

Fax (if exist 팩스번호(있는 경우)): +11(country code)-111-1111

10. Declaration by Applicant

신청인 선언문

- **I declare that the particulars and documents furnished in respect of this application are true and correct.**

나는 본 신청과 관련하여 제출한 모든 세부사항과 문서가 사실이고 정확함을 선언한다.

- **I understand that this application can be rejected and the permit issued by this application can be annulled if the particulars and documents furnished in respect of this application are not true and correct.**

나는 본 신청과 관련하여 제출한 세부사항과 문서 중 사실이 아니거나 틀린 사항이
있으면 신청이 기각되거나 발행된 신청서가 취소될 수 있음을 알고 있다.

Date(날짜): _____

Signature of Applicant(신청인 서명): _____

****Please submit the application to the following address by fax or email:***

다음의 팩스번호나 이메일 주소로 제출하십시오.

***Narcotics Policy Division
Pharmaceutical Safety Bureau
Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS)***

Fax. +82-43-719-2800

E-mail. narcotics@korea.kr

Example for Completing

■ Please mind bold red part with star sign only

마약류 취급승인 신청서(Narcotics bring in permit)

접수번호	접수일	발급일	처리기간	10 일
신청인 (Applicant)	성명(Name): ★ Micheal Smith (Put your name)		생년월일(Date of birth): ★ May 02, 1990 (Put your birth date)	
	주소(Address): ★ 111-111 ABC Avenue, DEF State, GHR Country (Put your address)			
	업소의 명칭 (법인인 경우 법인등록번호:)		대표자	
	업소의 소재지			
	소속부서			
취급의 목적 및 개요(Purpose of drug use): ★ Symptoms to treat with the medication applied. (e.g. Chronic pain, anxiety, sleep disorder, etc.)				
취급하려는 마약류 (Drugs wish to bring in)	품명(Name of drugs/ingredient) *narcotics medicine only ★		수량(Quantity) ★	
	Adderall XR (amphetamine, dextroamphetamine) 10mg tablet (Put the trade name, active ingredients' name, dose for one unite and form of the medicine you will bring in)		30 tablets. (Put the amount you will bring in. It will be the amount you can consume all in Korea. If you visit other country after leaving Korea, the amount for the period is allowed when you submit e-tickets for that trip.)	
	취급기간(period of drug supply e.g.14days): 使用期間 ★ 10 days (The period would be the same you will be in Korea. I you will visit another country for 5 days, please put "10 days + 5 extra days after leaving. ")			

「마약류 관리에 관한 법률 시행규칙」 제 5 조 및 제 6 조에 따라 위와 같이 마약류의
취급승인을 신청합니다.

년 월 일

신청인(Name)

★**申込者**

Micheal Smith

담당자 성명

(서명 또는 인)

Signature

★**署名**

*Micheal
Smith*

담당자 전화번호

식품의약품안전처장(Minister of Food and Drug Safety) 귀하

본인은 이건 업무처리와 관련하여 「전자정부법」 제 36 조제 1 항에 따른 행정정보의 공동이용을 통하여 담당 공무원이 출입국에 관한 사실증명을 확인하는 것에 동의합니다.

I agree that the agent in charge may check the truth regarding the immigration information by sharing administrative information under the Article 36 (1) of Electronic Government Act.

신청인(Name)★ Micheal Smith (서명 또는 인) Signature★ *Micheal Smith*

첨부서류	<p>1. 「마약류 관리에 관한 법률 시행규칙」 제 5 조제 1 항제 1 호, 제 1 호의 2, 제 2 호, 제 2 호의 2, 제 3 호부터 제 5 호까지 및 제 8 호, 같은 규칙 제 6 조에 해당하는 경우</p> <p>가. 해당 자격을 증명하는 서류 사본</p> <p>나. 취업계획서</p> <p>2. 「마약류 관리에 관한 법률 시행규칙」 제 5 조제 1 항제 6 호에 해당하는 경우</p> <p>가. 출입국을 증명하는 서류 사본(다만, 아래의 행정정보의 공동이용을 통하여 첨부서류에 대한 정보를 확인할 수 있는 경우에는 그 확인으로 첨부서류를 갈음하며, 신청인이 확인에 동의하지 않는 경우에는 신청인이 이를 제출해야 합니다)</p> <p>나. 휴대약품명, 휴대약품의 수량, 체류기간, 입국의 목적 등을 기재한 서류</p> <p>다. 「의료법」에 따른 의료기관(조산원을 제외합니다)의 장 또는 「지역보건법」에 따른 보건소의 장이 발행한 것으로서 자가치료에 필요한 마약 또는 향정신성의약품의 품명, 용법·용량 등이 명시된 진단서(입국자의 경우에는 해당 국가의 정부에서 발행한 자가치료용 마약 또는 향정신성의약품 반출승인서를 말한다)</p> <p>3. 「마약류 관리에 관한 법률 시행규칙」 제 5 조제 1 항제 7 호에 해당하는 경우: 해외 의료봉사·원조 또는 지원 목적임을 증명하는 서류로서 취급하려는 마약 또는 향정신성의약품의 품명, 수량 등이 기재된 해당 국가의 정부 또는 그 밖에 권한이 있는 기관이 발행한 서류</p>	수수료 없음
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처리절차

신청서 작성	접 수	검 토	기안 결재	승인서 작성	통보 및 발급
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신청인

처리기관 : 식품의약품안전처

210mm×297mm[백상지 80g/㎡]



— INFORMATION ON CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

Certain prescription drugs are considered controlled substances and subject to the regulations established by the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) and the Korean Customs Service. The procedures outlined below for importing/shipping medications or hand-carrying medications into the Republic of Korea are subject to change without notice. We recommend that you plan in advance and confirm the procedures with the relevant Korean authorities before bringing any drugs into the Republic of Korea.

Marijuana, CBD oil, and hemp-derivate products are heavily regulated in the Republic of Korea and should not be brought into Korea, including on airport layovers, without express written approval from the Korean government. Even with a U.S.-based prescription, possession of these products can result in deportations and arrests.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: Prohibited Substances in South Korea

- CANNABIS (CBD, THC, ETC)**
Marijuana is **ILLEGAL** in South Korea in all forms, including for medical purposes. This includes vape pens with CBD or THC substances. You will be arrested in Korea if found to be carrying any product derived from or containing marijuana.
- AMPHETAMINE DRUGS (ADDERALL, DEXEDRINE, ETC)**
It is **ILLEGAL** to bring amphetamine drugs (such as Adderall and Dexedrine) into Korea, **EVEN WITH A VALID PRESCRIPTION**, unless you have made specific arrangements with the MFDS* in advance.
- OPIATE DRUGS (HYDROCODONE, OXYCODONE, CODEINE, FENTANYL, ETC)**
It is **ILLEGAL** to bring opiate drugs (such as hydrocodone and oxycodone) into Korea, **EVEN WITH A VALID PRESCRIPTION**, unless you have made specific arrangements with the MFDS* in advance.
- BENZODIAZEPINE DRUGS (XANAX, VALIUM, KLOPINOLIN, ETC)**
It is **ILLEGAL** to bring benzodiazepine drugs (such as Xanax, Valium, and Klonopin) into Korea, **EVEN WITH A VALID PRESCRIPTION**, unless you have made specific arrangements with the MFDS* in advance.

Please be aware that Korean authorities regularly arrest and prosecute international travelers arriving in Korea for carrying prescription drugs (usually derivatives of opiates, amphetamines, and THC) or CBD products that are legal elsewhere but highly illegal in Korea. Before traveling, contact the MFDS* (Ministry of Food and Drug Safety) for up-to-date information at narcotics@korea.kr. You must declare your prohibited medication to the MFDS at least ten days before travel and obtain official approval. *Disclaimer: this infographic does not encompass all potential categories of substances prohibited by Korean authorities. Please consult with MFDS for a comprehensive list.*

Please note that food products containing poppy seeds, including popular bagel seasoning blends, are considered illegal in Korea. Attempting to travel into Korea with these products could result in a criminal investigation resulting in fines, entry and exit bans, or even imprisonment.

We strongly recommend U.S. travelers to Korea refer to the Korean FDA website (<https://www.foodsafetykorea.go.kr>). You can search for specific products on their [website](#).

— Bringing prescription drugs into the Republic of Korea

Korea's Ministry of Food and Drug Safety requires all travelers—regardless of nationality—to obtain advance approval before entering Korea with medications containing controlled substances, including but not limited to CBD/THC oil, amphetamines, opiates, and benzodiazepines. This requirement has been in effect since October 23, 2009, under the Enforcement Rule of the Narcotics Control Act. You can apply online through the [website](#). The application procedure is available [here](#). For questions or email the Ministry directly at narcotics@korea.kr.

For non-controlled medications, you may bring up to six bottles (or a three-month supply) into Korea for personal use. Bring your original prescriptions, a letter from your doctor specifying your medical condition, and a statement from your doctor listing the medicines you are importing. Please also consider asking your U.S. doctor about substitute medicines or local equivalents available in Korea.

The Korean Customs Service at Incheon Airport makes final decisions about items allowed into the country. Review the [Korean Customs website](#) for information on customs clearance and goods requiring declaration and inspection.