



THE HON JUSTINE ELLIOT
ACTING MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING
MEDIA RELEASE

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MEDICARE REBATE FOR BREAST MRI

A Medicare rebate for an MRI breast scan will be available to women under 50 at high risk of breast cancer and with no symptoms from 1 February 2009.

Being at high risk of breast cancer can cause significant anxiety. These scans can help reduce unnecessary concern, and help pick up breast cancer early.

The Australian Government is reducing the financial barrier of the cost of a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan to encourage these women in the high risk category to monitor their health.

Women at high risk of breast cancer include, for example, women with three or more close blood relatives diagnosed with breast or ovarian cancer.

Further details about the women eligible for this Medicare rebate will be available from 1 February 2009 on MBSonline at www.health.gov.au

The new measure follows a recommendation from the Medical Services Advisory Committee that breast MRI, when combined with mammography, is a safe and effective way to diagnose breast cancer in younger women with no symptoms at high risk of this disease.

MRI uses magnetic fields to generate images that can help diagnose illnesses. It is especially effective on soft tissue - making it an important tool for working with diseases such as cancer and strokes.

The Government already supports the diagnosis of breast cancer in women with symptoms or a past history of breast cancer through Medicare funding. This covers a variety of procedures other than MRI - such as diagnostic mammography, ultrasound and guided biopsies.

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