

Cheaper Medicines

PBS co-payment freeze FAQs



From 1 January 2025, the Australian Government introduced a freeze on the patient co-payment for all Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines. This ensures people can continue accessing affordable medicines.

What is the PBS co-payment freeze?

The maximum price that patients will pay for a PBS medicine is called the patient co-payment. There is a freeze on the patient co-payment that patients pay when they fill their prescription.

For Medicare cardholders, the patient co-payment for PBS medicines will stay at \$31.60 for 2025, which is the same rate as it was in 2024.

For Commonwealth concession cardholders, the patient co-payment will stay at \$7.70 until 2030. This means the maximum patient co-payment will not increase with indexation for five years.

What does the PBS co-payment freeze cover?

The freeze applies to the patient co-payment amount for all PBS-listed medicines. It ensures that patients will not pay more than the current amount for their medicines and that this cost will not increase due to indexation.

Does the freeze apply to all PBS-listed medicines?

Yes, the freeze covers all PBS-listed medicines, but standard pricing variations may still apply between generic and brand-name options. Prices for medicines may also vary where the cost is less than the PBS patient-co-payment.

Are there any exceptions to the freeze?

Newly listed medicines added to the PBS will be included in the freeze.

For medicines not listed on the PBS, these prices will be determined by the pharmaceutical company that makes the medicine. These costs aren't subsidised as part of the PBS.

How will the freeze impact pharmacy reimbursements for PBS medicines?

Pharmacy reimbursements for dispensing PBS medicines remain unchanged. Dispensing fees and other related payments from the government will continue.

Cheaper Medicines

PBS co-payment freeze FAQs



What happens to the optional \$1 discount?

The optional \$1 discount is a discount that pharmacists can offer on PBS patient co-payments.

The optional \$1 discount will gradually reduce from 1 January 2025, it will decrease by indexation until it reaches zero.

How should I explain the co-payment freeze to patients?

You can advise patients that the government has frozen the maximum cost to patients for all PBS medicines. Inform patients that the cost of their prescriptions will not increase due to indexation and the amount they pay for their prescriptions in 2025 is the same as 2024. Emphasise that the freeze to patient costs for PBS medicines is to keep your patient's medicines affordable.

What if patients notice differences in medicine pricing between pharmacies?

Explain that while the co-payment has not changed, prices for different brands of the same medicine may vary. Encourage patients to compare their options and consider generic medicines as a way to help them manage out-of-pocket expenses.

Some prescription costs are determined at the pharmacy level. These costs may vary from pharmacy to pharmacy and consumers may want to compare to find the best deal.

Will the PBS Safety Net thresholds change due to the price freeze?

The PBS Safety Net for general consumers increased to \$1694 from 1 January 2025. The PBS Safety Net for concessional patients has stayed the same.

Patients can continue tracking their PBS expenses to see if they qualify for additional benefits.

Are there tools to help patients monitor their medicine costs?

Yes, pharmacists can access the PBS Safety Net record to assist patients in managing their expenses.

Pharmacists can help by informing patients if/when they will hit the PBS Safety Net and what changes they can expect to their medical costs.

How will the freeze affect private prescriptions?

The price freeze only applies to PBS-listed medicines. Private prescriptions for non-PBS medicines will continue to follow market pricing.

Will these changes affect pharmacy operations?

No changes are required to how PBS prescriptions are processed. Continue offering guidance to patients as usual.

Cheaper Medicines

PBS co-payment freeze FAQs



Will the freeze affect the availability of certain medicines?

The PBS co-payment freeze should not impact medicine availability. Both generic and brand-name options will remain accessible to patients.

Are prescribers being informed about the freeze to maximum PBS patient costs?

Yes, the government is informing healthcare professionals about the freeze to ensure consistent messaging and support for patients.

Where can I direct patients for more information?

Patients can visit health.gov.au/cheapermedicines for detailed information about the changes to PBS medicine pricing and the introduction of 60-day prescriptions.

What resources are available for pharmacists?

Education materials, posters, and online FAQs are available at health.gov.au/cheapermedicines to help you communicate these changes to your patients.

More information

For more details on the PBS co-payment freeze, visit health.gov.au/cheapermedicines or refer to PBS resources at your pharmacy.