

PBS co-payment freeze example

Living with disability



It is estimated that approximately 3 per cent of Australians aged under 25 are on the autism spectrum.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong condition that can affect how people behave and interact with the world around them. It is estimated that a third of people with ASD also have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Andrew is a young person who lives with ASD and ADHD. Some of the symptoms he experiences are sensory differences, difficulty planning and finishing tasks, difficulty regulating emotions and insomnia.

Andrew takes four different medications to help manage his symptoms and these are listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). He takes an 18 mg long-acting methylphenidate (Concerta®) tablet each morning, along with half a 10 mg short-acting methylphenidate (Ritalin®) tablet at lunchtime. In the evening, he takes a 2 mg risperidone (Risperdal®) tablet. He also takes a 100 mcg clonidine (Catapres®) tablet to help him sleep.

Andrew has a concession card that allows him to access PBS-listed medicines at a lower cost.

In 2024, each of his Concerta®, Risperdal® and Catapres® prescriptions cost \$7.70. Each Ritalin® prescription was \$11.46 for 100 tablets, as Ritalin® 10 mg tablets have a brand premium of \$3.76. The Australian Government, through the PBS, subsidises up to the price of the lowest brand, meaning that consumers may have to pay extra (a brand premium) for certain brands.

\$7.70 is the maximum cost of a PBS-listed medicine for a concession cardholder, with the exception of any brand premiums. This amount is called the patient co-payment, and it usually increases each year due to indexation.

Since 1 January 2025, Andrew still pays \$7.70 for his Concerta®, Risperdal® and Catapres® prescriptions, because the patient co-payment for concession cardholders has been frozen until 2030.

In 2025, Andrew chose to switch to a generic version of his methylphenidate 10 mg tablet prescription to save on the cost of this medicine and he now pays \$7.70 for this prescription.



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