

**medicare**

# Cheaper Medicines

**PBS co-payment freeze  
for concession card holders**



From 1 January 2025, the Australian Government introduced a freeze on the maximum price that Commonwealth concession card holders can pay for medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). The freeze capped the price of each PBS medicine at \$7.70, plus any applicable premiums, until 2030 to help you access the medications you need.

## What is the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme?

The PBS is an Australian Government program that subsidises the cost of prescription medicines to make them more affordable.

The maximum amount you can pay for each prescription is called the PBS patient co-payment, with the Government paying the remaining cost of the medicine. The freeze on the co-payment means the cost of your PBS medicines will not increase, so you have certainty when it comes to managing your health.

## What you need to know about the PBS co-payment freeze

### For pensioners and Commonwealth concession cardholders

The concessional co-payment for a PBS prescription will remain at \$7.70, plus any applicable premiums, until 2030. This does not apply to medicines that are not listed on the PBS.

## Optional \$1 discount

The optional \$1 discount that pharmacists can apply to the cost of PBS medicines is being gradually reduced from 1 January 2025, while the concessional co-payment is frozen. It will decrease each year by the amount of indexation that would have applied to your co-payment until it reaches zero in 2030.

## How to check if your prescription medicine is covered by the PBS

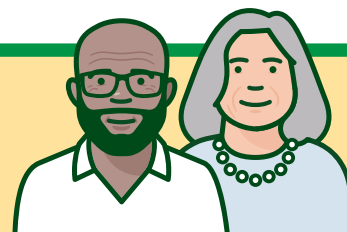
There are 3 ways to check if your prescription medicine is on the PBS:

1. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if your prescribed medicine is listed on the PBS.
2. Check if your prescription is marked with 'PBS/RPBS' (Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for veterans).
3. Search the PBS website for your medicine by its name or active ingredient.



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## Why it matters

The maximum patient cost of medicines listed on the PBS won't rise until 2030. This will keep medicines affordable and ease pressure on household budgets, so you don't need to delay getting your medicine because of the cost.

## Talk to your pharmacist about medicine costs

Some PBS-listed medicines cost less than the patient co-payment. Prices for these medicines can vary from one pharmacy to another.

If multiple brands of the same medicine are available, the cost may differ. Choosing a more expensive brand could increase your out-of-pocket costs.

In most cases, a pharmacy cannot charge more than the co-payment, except when a brand premium applies to a particular brand of medicine.

Your pharmacist is a good source of advice for managing your medication costs. Here are some questions you can ask when visiting your pharmacy.

### “Is this medicine listed on the PBS?”

Not all prescriptions are PBS-listed, so it's worth checking to avoid unexpected costs.

### “Are there generic or cheaper alternatives to my prescribed medicine?”

Generic medicines contain the same active ingredients and provide the same therapeutic benefits as brand-name medicines but may cost less.

### “What are the price differences between the available brands for my prescription?”

Pharmacists can tell you if a different brand offers the same benefits at a lower cost.

Pharmacists can also explain how the PBS Safety Net works and how you can track your medication expenses. Don't hesitate to ask about ways to make your medication more affordable.

## More ways to save

If you have a stable, ongoing health condition, your medication may be available on a 60-day prescription. A 60-day supply of your medication on a single prescription means fewer trips to the pharmacy – saving you time and money.

A range of PBS medicines is available for 60-day prescriptions. Ask your doctor if your medicine is listed.

## More information

Talk to your pharmacist or prescriber to better understand your medication options and costs.

For more information on how the PBS concessional co-payment freeze can help you and your family, and about 60-day prescriptions, visit [health.gov.au/cheapermedicines](https://health.gov.au/cheapermedicines)

