

What is the Medical Treatment Overseas Program?

The Australian Government provides financial assistance through the Medical Treatment Overseas Program (MTOP) for people with life-threatening conditions who require medical treatment overseas because the proposed treatment, or an effective alternative, is not available in Australia.

This booklet provides an overview of the MTOP, including how the application process works and the financial support that may be available if an application is approved. This document is intended as a summary only.

If you have any outstanding questions, you may wish to:

- review our FAQs (see link on final page)
- review the MTOP Guidelines (see link on final page)
- contact the team using the details below.

Contact Us

Email: MTOP@health.gov.au

Web: [Medical Treatment Overseas Program | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)

Phone: (02) 6289 7496 (from overseas: 0011-61-2-6289 7496)

All calls are automatically sent to voicemail. Please leave a message and the team will return your call as soon as possible. Calls from the MTOP will show as *No Caller ID*.



Medical Treatment Overseas Program

Australian Government Department of Health, Disability
and Ageing

MTOP Eligibility



Administrative Eligibility

To be assessed under the MTOP, applications must meet the administrative criteria below.

The applicant must:

- be eligible for Medicare
- be residing in Australia as their usual place of residence
- be **referred to the overseas treatment facility** for the proposed treatment **by an Australian treating specialist**

The overseas medical treatment must:

- be for the treatment of a **life-threatening condition**
- be for a **specific treatment**
- be completely **administered outside of Australia**
- be of **curative intent**

The MTOP does not provide financial assistance for:

- treatments that are **experimental**
- treatments that are **palliative in nature**
- participation in a **clinical trial**
- **emergency** medical assistance **while travelling overseas**



Medical Eligibility

If an application meets the administrative criteria, it will then be assessed against four medical eligibility criteria:

- A) the proposed overseas treatment, or an effective alternative treatment must not be available in Australia in time to benefit the applicant
- B) the treatment must be significantly life extending or potentially curative
- C) there must be a real prospect of success for the applicant
- D) the treatment must be accepted by the Australian medical profession as a standard form of treatment for the applicant's condition

For more detail about the medical eligibility criteria, please see the MTOP Guidelines (link on final page).

All four medical eligibility criteria must be met for an application to be approved.

MTOP Assessment Process

A visual outline of the full MTOP assessment process is available online (link on final page).

An Australian treating specialist can apply to the MTOP for their patient ('the applicant'). Applications must be emailed to MTOP@health.gov.au.

The application must:

- be submitted using the relevant MTOP application form
- be **supported and signed by the Australian treating specialist**
- be **signed by the applicant** (or their parent/legal guardian)
- **include all relevant documentation** as outlined in the application form

If the application does not meet the administrative criteria, the Australian treating specialist and the applicant will be advised that the application will not proceed.

If this happens, additional information can be submitted and the application can be re-assessed against the administrative criteria.

If an application meets the administrative criteria, a Panel of the department's Medical Advisers will assess it against the four medical eligibility criteria.

As part of this assessment, the department may ask relevant professional groups or medical experts for information or advice. A de-identified copy of the application and supporting documents may be provided to them.

Positive Assessment

If the Panel concludes that the application meets all four medical eligibility criteria, advice will be provided to the MTOP Delegate for a decision.

Negative Assessment

If the Panel concludes that the application does not meet one or more of the four medical eligibility criteria, the Australian treating specialist will receive a copy of the initial negative medical assessment. *Please note this is not a decision on the application.*

The Australian treating specialist will have 21 days to comment on the initial medical assessment and to submit any additional information in support of the application.

The Panel of Medical Advisers will consider all information provided before finalising the assessment.

Once the assessment is finalised, advice will be provided to the MTOP Delegate for a decision.

Application Decision

The MTOP Delegate (decision-maker) must be satisfied that all four medical eligibility criteria are met before approving an application.

The MTOP Delegate must also be satisfied that the funding would be an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public money.

Once the MTOP Delegate makes a final decision, the Australian treating specialist and applicant will be notified in writing.

A more detailed description of the MTOP assessment process can be found in the MTOP Guidelines (link on final page).

MTOP Funding

If an application is approved, the following costs can be covered for the approved applicant and one approved carer:

- ✓ The **full cost of the approved treatment** by the approved overseas facility

The department will directly pay the cost of the approved treatment to the overseas facility.

Please note, the MTOP does not cover medical costs for the approved carer or any other travellers (see travel insurance).

- ✓ **Return airfares** for the applicant and one carer (including reasonable travel expenses to and from the airport)

Flights are booked and paid for by the MTOP.

Approved applicants are booked in business class for international flights and economy class for domestic flights.

Approved carers are booked in business class for international flights (when travelling with the applicant) and economy class for all other flights.

! If additional people are travelling (for example other family members), they are responsible for booking and paying for their own travel.

- ✓ **Passports, visas and departure taxes** (where applicable)

Approved applicants and carers are responsible for arranging passports and visas, if required, before travel.

Please use an official website and check Smartraveller if you are unsure.

- ✓ **100% of reasonable accommodation** expenses

The MTOP covers accommodation costs from the night before the first appointment until the night of the last appointment (unless a medical practitioner from the overseas facility confirms a longer stay is required).

In general, the approved applicant or carer books their accommodation and then seeks reimbursement from the MTOP.

The MTOP recommends accommodation that:

- is self-contained (e.g., a 2-bedroom apartment)
- has access to cooking and laundry facilities
- is located in a safe area close to the treatment facility.

Costs for reasonable 3½ star (or equivalent) accommodation will be reimbursed when proof of payment is provided. If the approved applicant or carer chooses higher-standard accommodation, the department will calculate a 3½ star equivalent rate and reimburse the lower amount.

Some facilities may book and pay for accommodation for an approved applicant and one carer, and bill the MTOP directly. Please check with your facility to see if this is available.

- ✓ **Travel Insurance**

Approved applicants and carers are responsible for arranging travel insurance before departure. Travel insurance does not need to cover the approved treatment or airfares of the approved applicant/carers.

The MTOP cannot endorse or recommend travel insurance products. If you cannot buy an off the shelf product, you may wish to contact an insurance broker such, as the National Insurance Broker Association, for advice.

MTOP Funding

The MTOP does not cover:

- ✗ **Daily transportation** (routine travel to and from the overseas treatment facility) including car hire, public transport, taxi or ride share.
- ✗ **Day-to-day living expenses** such as food, room service, phone calls, SIM cards, mobile plans, internet, cleaning or washing services, tips or gratuities.
- ✗ Medical consultations or treatment for the approved applicant that are unrelated to the medical condition the application was approved for.
- ✗ Medical consultations or treatment for the approved carer, or any other person travelling with the approved applicant.
- ✗ Transport or accommodation costs for any person travelling with the approved applicant, other than the approved carer.
- ✗ Follow up medical care provided by the overseas treatment facility after the approved treatment has finished.
- ✗ Any diagnostic or medical treatment received in Australia in preparation for treatment overseas.
- ✗ Any diagnostic or medical treatment received overseas to obtain medical advice or a medical assessment before a treatment plan is confirmed.

This is a summary and not an exhaustive list. Please see the MTOP Guidelines for further information around MTOP coverage.

Reimbursements

After an application is approved, the MTOP will give the approved applicant or carer the forms and instructions needed to make a reimbursement claim.

Approved applicants and carers do not need to wait until they return to Australia to submit claims for reimbursement of eligible expenses.

Reimbursement will only be made where proof of personal expenditure can be provided.

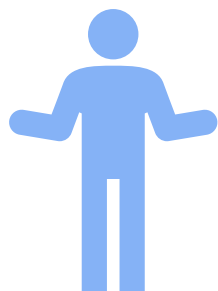
Proof of payment must be original receipts or fully itemised paid accounts that show:

- your name
- the expense incurred
- the amount paid
- the date the account was paid

If the claim is in a foreign currency, the exchange rate on the day of the transaction will be used to work out the amount payable.

A personal credit card or bank statement can be used as proof of the exchange rate if it shows:

- your name
- the cost in the foreign currency
- the amount paid in Australian dollars.



Questions to Ask the Overseas Treatment Facility

If your application is approved and you are feeling overwhelmed or unsure, the overseas treatment facility may be an important source of support.

Most overseas facilities have staff, such as social workers or patient liaison officers, who can provide local advice, including on accommodation and daily transport options.

Retrospective Applications

Patients considering treatment overseas should discuss their options with their Australian treating team before travelling.

Under the MTOP, an Australian specialist must refer the applicant to the overseas treating facility. This applies to all applications including prospective and retrospective.

Retrospective applications can be made up to two years after the date which overseas treatment started.

Applicants should note that **any overseas travel or medical treatment undertaken before an application is approved is done at the applicant's own risk and expense.**

Helpful Resources

MTOP Frequently Asked Questions

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/mtop-frequently-asked-questions>

MTOP Guidelines

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/medical-treatment-overseas-program-guidelines-for-applicants?language=en>

General MTOP Application Form and Proton Beam Therapy Application Form

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/medical-treatment-overseas-program-application-form?language=en>

MTOP Assessment Process Flowchart

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/mtop-assessment-process-flowchart>

Smartraveller

<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au>