

MEDICARE REBATES FOR ALLIED HEALTH - PATIENT INFORMATION

Who is eligible?

You may be able to claim Medicare rebates for allied health services if you have a chronic medical condition that is being managed by your GP under an Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) plan.

Chronic medical conditions

A chronic medical condition is one that has been (or is likely to be) present for six months or longer. It includes conditions such as asthma, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal conditions and stroke.

EPC plan

Care plans can help you and your GP manage your chronic medical condition by identifying your needs and planning what should be done. An EPC plan involves your GP preparing a GP Management Plan and Team Care Arrangements.

If you have a chronic medical condition, a GP Management Plan provides an organised approach to your care. It is a plan of action that you have agreed with your GP.

If you have complex care needs, Team Care Arrangements help coordinate your care. Your GP will collaborate with at least two other care providers involved in your treatment.

Individual allied health services

Once you have an EPC plan, you can be referred for up to five allied health services each calendar year. Your GP will decide whether you would benefit from these services and make the referrals.

The five services can be provided by a single allied health professional or shared across different professionals.

You can request that the GP refer you to an allied health professional you already know, or your GP can recommend one.

Allied health professionals need to meet specific eligibility criteria and be registered with Medicare Australia.

Eligible allied health professionals

- Aboriginal health workers
- audiologists
- chiropractors
- diabetes educators
- dietitians
- exercise physiologists
- mental health workers
- occupational therapists
- osteopaths
- physiotherapists
- podiatrists
- psychologists
- speech pathologists



Group services for patients with type 2 diabetes

If you have type 2 diabetes and your GP has prepared a GP Management Plan, you may be referred for group services to help you manage your diabetes.

Assessment

Your GP can refer you to either a diabetes educator, dietitian or exercise physiologist for an assessment. This involves taking a comprehensive history, identifying individual goals and preparing you for an appropriate group services program.

You can claim a Medicare rebate for one assessment each calendar year.

Group services

Group service sessions are also run by diabetes educators, dietitians and/or exercise physiologists. Sessions could cover:

- blood glucose monitoring
- food labels and recipe modification
- exercise strategies
- associated health care concerns
- strategies for change

Following an assessment, you can claim Medicare rebates for up to eight group sessions each calendar year.

Mental health services

For more information on Medicare rebates for allied mental health services talk to your GP or go to the Department of Health and Ageing web site at www.health.gov.au and follow the A-Z links to 'M' for mental health.

Dental health services

In some cases, your GP may also be able to refer you to a dentist for further assessment and treatment. More information is available at www.health.gov.au/epc.

Private health insurance

If you have private health insurance, you will need to decide if you wish to use Medicare or your private health insurance to pay for these services. You cannot use private health insurance ancillary cover to 'top up' your Medicare rebate.

Claiming

It is important to remember that you or your GP will need to have claimed Medicare rebates for your GP Management Plan and Team Care Arrangements before allied health services are claimed.

Allied health professionals, like doctors, are free to set the level of their fees. If your allied health provider bulk bills, there will be no charge for these services. If not, you will be charged a fee and you can claim the rebate from Medicare.

Out-of-pocket expenses for these services count towards the extended Medicare safety net.

If you are unsure, or lose track of how many allied health services you have claimed in a year, you can check with Medicare Australia on 132 011.

If you have any questions, ask your doctor or practice nurse