

Patient:

Date:

High-cost medicines in public hospitals

This document is helpful if you (or someone you look after) may need treatment with a high-cost medicine and are:

- a patient in a public hospital
- seeing a public hospital specialist or
- going to a public hospital clinic.

What is a high-cost medicine?

A high-cost medicine is a medicine that:

- is very expensive and
- the government's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) does not cover.



Scan or click here to learn about the [PBS](#)

The PBS lowers the cost of many medicines for Australians but does not cover all uses of a medicine.

Often these medicines are not routinely available in public hospitals. So, before you can use the medicine there is an approval process that may need to take place. Each hospital has a group of experts that decide whether to approve a high-cost medicine for use in their hospital.

These expert groups aim to make decisions that are fair and help as many people as possible.

Do I have to pay for the medicine?



The hospital will let you know about any costs you may need to pay. They may ask you to pay the standard price charged for any hospital-supplied medicine. The price may be less if you have a pension or concession card.

The approval process: what to expect



Your doctor will:

- talk with you about how the high-cost medicine may help
- check that you meet certain rules for using the medicine.
- ask for approval to use the medicine from the hospital's expert group.



The experts use an agreed process to look at:

- current evidence on how well the medicine may help you (its health benefits)
- how safe the medicine is
- the cost compared to the health benefits (how cost-effective the medicine is)
- if other choices exist.



Be prepared that:

- the approval process may take time.
- not all high-cost medicines get approved.
- if approved, the hospital may need time to get the medicine.
- you may not be able to use the approval at another hospital.

Your healthcare team will talk to you about the process and how long it will take.



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What happens next:



If the medicine does not get approved:

Your healthcare team will talk to you about what to do next and other choices there are for you.



If the medicine does get approved:

Your healthcare team will talk with you or your carer about:

- how long the approval lasts and when the expert group will next talk about its use
- how and when to get the medicine
- how to take or give the medicine
- how you will know if the medicine is working and any possible bad reactions (side effects)
- any tests you need, such as blood tests and scans.

Your team may consist of doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other health professionals (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers/Practitioners).

Where to get the medicine



Your team will talk with you or your carer about where to get your medicine. In most cases, the hospital will source, store and supply the medicine. If you live in a remote area, you may need to collect it from a local pharmacy or health centre.

Please note you may only be able to get the medicine from the place that approved its use.

Talk to your team if you plan to move, travel or change hospitals as you may need a new approval.

Where to get more information



Talk to a member of your healthcare team for more advice.

If you feel you need support talking to your healthcare team, you can ask for help from:

- family
- friends
- a carer, or
- a trusted patient support person.

Please be aware that any details you find online about your medicine may not be correct because the details:

- may not be relevant to Australia, or
- may be about its use for a different illness.

Talk to a member of your healthcare team if you have any questions about your medicine.

My high-cost medicine

Medicine:

This medicine will treat:
(add patient's illness)

If you have any questions, please call:

Name:

Telephone:

Note: This document does not address other ways of funding medicines.

CATAG presents the details in this document with all due care. CATAG accepts no responsibility for any loss, claim or damage because of using this document. The document does not replace medical advice.

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