



Round the Clock Medicare: Higher Medicare Rebates for After-Hours GP Attendances

Higher Medicare rebates from 1 January 2005

On 1 January 2005, new Medicare items were introduced for after-hours GP attendances (consultations).

The Medicare benefit for these items is \$10 higher than the corresponding items used during non-after-hours periods. For some of these items, the difference is now \$10.20 due to indexation from 1 November 2005.

From 1 January 2005, the Medicare benefit for the existing GP emergency after-hours items was also increased by \$10.

What are the after-hours attendance items?

GPs can claim after-hours items for most professional attendances (consultations) provided during an after-hours period, as defined below.

There are 16 after-hours attendance items (5000 to 5067) for vocationally registered GPs. These items correspond to most of the attendance items in Group A1 of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) – see table below.

Similarly, there are 16 after-hours attendance items (5200 to 5267) for other medical practitioners (non-vocationally registered GPs). These items correspond to most of the attendance items in Group A2 of the MBS – see table below.

The after-hours attendance items and explanatory notes are set out in the 1 November 2005 Medicare Benefits Schedule Book which is available to all medical practitioners. It can also be found at the Department's website:

www.health.gov.au/pubs/mbs/index.htm

When can the after-hours attendance items be claimed?

The rules for the after-hours attendance items are the same as the corresponding items in Groups A1 and A2 of the MBS, except that the after-hours attendance items can only be claimed for services rendered during specified times.

For all of the after-hours attendance items, the service must be provided either:

- On a public holiday;
- On a Sunday;
- Before 8am or after 1pm on a Saturday; or
- Before 8am or after 8pm on any other day.

In order to claim the after-hours attendance items (5000-5067 and 5200-5267), the professional attendance itself must begin in an after-hours period regardless of when the appointment is made.

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Are the after-hours attendance items restricted to services provided by after-hours Medical Deputising Services?

No. The after-hours attendance items can be claimed by any vocationally or non-vocationally registered GP as long as the rules and criteria for the relevant item(s) are satisfied.

How are the existing emergency after-hours MBS items affected?

Prior to 1 January 2005, there were existing GP emergency after-hours items. These items (1, 2, 97, 98, 601, 602, 697 and 698) continue to apply, with the schedule fee increased by \$10 from 1 January 2005.

The emergency after-hours items can only be used for the first patient if more than one patient is seen on the one occasion. For the second and subsequent patients attended on the same occasion, the after-hours attendance items now apply instead of the normal (non after-hours) attendance items.

The emergency after-hours items and explanatory notes are set out in the **November 2005 Medicare Benefits Schedule Book**.

The emergency after-hours items for sports physician attendances (448 and 449) also continue to apply. Apart from annual indexation, there has been no change in the schedule fee for these items.

Does the 100% Medicare rebate also apply to the items described in this fact sheet? *

Yes. The Medicare rebate for the after-hours attendance items and the emergency after-hours items is now paid at 100% of the schedule fee.

* For further information, see the separate fact sheet on 100% Medicare rebate for GP attendances.

Do the bulk billing incentives still apply?

Yes. The bulk billing incentive items (10990 and 10991) which apply to bulk billed services provided to Commonwealth concession card holders and children under 16 years of age, can be claimed in conjunction with the after-hours attendance items and the emergency after-hours items.

From 1 January 2005, a new bulk billing incentive item (10992) was introduced. This item enables medical practitioners providing out-of-surgery after-hours attendances to access the higher level (\$7.85) bulk billing incentive in certain circumstances. Item 10992 can be claimed in conjunction with some of the new after-hours items and some of the existing emergency after-hours items. **

** For further information, see the separate fact sheet - Access to the higher (\$7.85) bulk billing incentive for medical practitioners providing after-hours services in eligible areas.

Example of how the new after-hours items will work

Example:

Louise holds a Commonwealth concession card and attends her GP in inner Brisbane at 9pm on Friday night at the GP's surgery. The attendance is for a standard consultation provided by a vocationally registered GP and is bulk-billed.

The GP is entitled to claim:

Item 5020 \$41.65 +
Item 10990 \$5.15 =
Total Medicare benefit of \$46.80

Further information

For further information, visit the Medicare Australia website at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/medicareinitiatives or call Medicare Australia on 132 150.

After-Hours Attendance Items 5000-5067 for Vocationally Registered GPs

The after-hours attendances items for vocationally-registered GPs (and the corresponding items in Group A1 of the MBS) are set out below.

After-hours MBS items (Group A22)	Corresponding MBS items (Group A1)
5000	3
5003	4
5007	13
5010	20
5020	23
5023	24
5026	25
5028	35
5040	36
5043	37
5046	38
5049	43
5060	44
5063	47
5064	48
5067	51

There are no after-hours items for consultations provided to patients who have been admitted to a hospital (i.e. there are no corresponding after-hours items for items 19, 33, 40 and 50 in Group A1).

After-Hours Attendance Items 5200-5267 for Non-Vocationally Registered GPs

The after-hours attendance items for non-vocationally-registered GPs (and the corresponding items in Group A2 of the MBS) are set out below.

After-hours MBS items (Group A23)	Corresponding MBS items (Group A2)
5200	52
5203	53
5207	54
5208	57
5220	58
5223	59
5227	60
5228	65
5240	81
5243	83
5247	84
5248	86
5260	92
5263	93
5265	95
5267	96

There are no after-hours items for consultations provided to patients who have been admitted to a hospital (i.e. there are no corresponding after-hours items for items 87, 89, 90 and 91 in Group A2).