

Streamlining the authority approval process

A number of changes are being made to the PBS to ensure it remains affordable and can continue to provide Australians with access to cost-effective medicine into the future. One of the changes involves the authority approval process.

What you need to know about dispensing authority prescriptions

A new process for prescribers

From 1 July 2007, prescribers will be able to follow a new streamlined authority process for about 200 of the 450 PBS authority required items—relating to about 85 medicines.

In most cases for streamlined authority required medicine, prescribers will no longer need to contact Medicare Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs to obtain an authority approval number. Instead, a streamlined authority code will be published in the *Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits*—the Schedule is available in hard copy and online, by visiting www.pbs.gov.au.

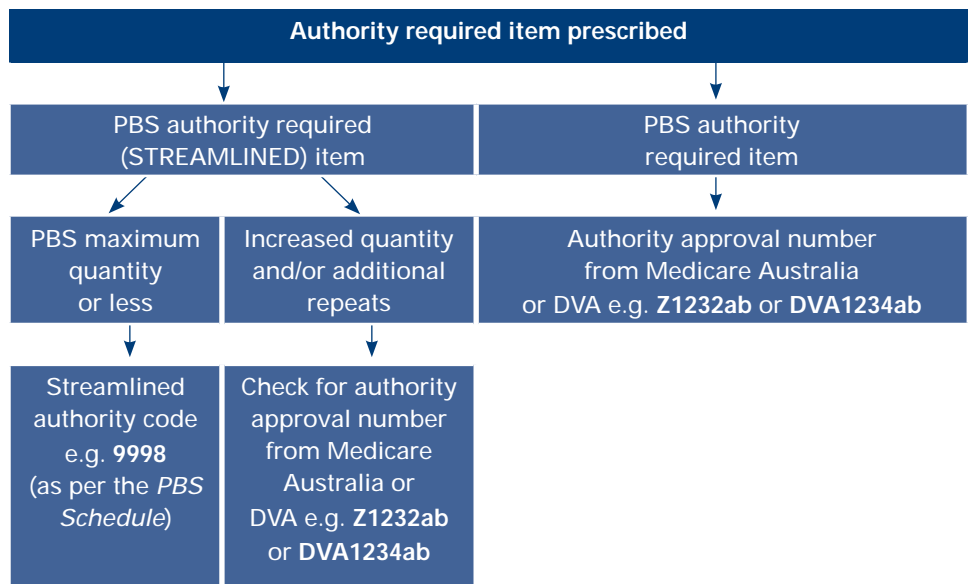
Items in the Schedule will be marked **Authority required (STREAMLINED)**. The streamlined authority code will consist of four digits and will need to be written on an authority prescription.

Prescribers will still need to ensure that their patient meets the authority restriction criteria before prescribing any streamlined authority required medicine.

Medicare Australia will continue to undertake compliance activities in relation to authority medicine including streamlined authority medicine. In addition, a committee comprising representatives of the Department of Health and Ageing, Medicare Australia and the Australian Medical Association will monitor the use of streamlined authority medicine and review the arrangements as necessary.

When dispensing streamlined authority prescriptions please ensure:

- ✓ The streamlined authority code is on the prescription.
- ✓ The prescription is an authority prescription.
- ✓ An authority approval number is on the prescription for increased quantities and/or repeats **above those specified in the Schedule.**



Important information for pharmacists

- Before dispensing any authority required medicine, pharmacists will need to sight a valid authority approval number (e.g. Z1232ab) or a new, four digit streamlined authority code (e.g. 9998) on the prescription.
- Prescribers are required to use authority prescriptions for all authority required medicine—streamlined or otherwise.
- For increased quantities and/or additional repeats, above those specified in the Schedule, prescribers are required to contact Medicare Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs for an authority approval number (e.g. z1232ab or DVA1234ab).
- The authority approval number (e.g. Z1232ab or DVA1234ab) is required for all other authority required medicine.
- For pharmacists who are registered for online claiming for PBS, the new streamlined process will be supported by warning and reject messages that will alert and prompt the pharmacist when dispensing streamlined authority medicine:
 - RC150**—Authority prescription number provided does not exist
 - RC151**—Authority prescription details provided do not match Medicare Australia authority records
 - RC556**—Authority required (STREAMLINED) for increased quantity or repeats. Approval from Medicare Australia or DVA required.
- Pharmacists will continue to be updated about PBS reforms that effect them, including online and dispensing incentives.

The screenshot shows the PBS website search results for 'ALENDRONATE SODIUM'. The search results table includes columns for Item No., Code, Name, Strength, Form, Brand name & manufacturer, Dosage, No. of repeats, Price amount, Discounted price for new users, Max. reimbursable value for safety net, Information sheets, and Price to consumer. The results show 'ALENDRONATE SODIUM Tablet equivalent to 40 mg alendronic acid' with a price of \$30.70. A blue arrow points from the search results to the 'Authority required (STREAMLINED)' section below.

This close-up shows the 'Authority required (STREAMLINED)' section. It features a red circle around the text '9998 Symptomatic Paget's disease of bone'. Below this, a table lists the medication details: 'ALENDRONATE SODIUM Tablet equivalent to 40 mg alendronic acid' with a price of \$30.70.

The image shows a handwritten PBS-RPBS authority prescription form. The form includes fields for Prescriber Name (IAMA SAMPLE), Address (7 PRESCRIBER STREET, DOCVILLE SA 2001), Telephone (987654), and Prescriber No. (987654). The Patient's name and address are also filled in (JOHN CITIZEN, 1 STATION STREET, DOCVILLE SA 2001). The medication is 'Alendronate Sodium 40mg', '1 daily', and the quantity is '30'. The date is '10/5/2001'. A red circle highlights the 'Authority required (STREAMLINED)' code '9998' in the bottom right corner.

For further information about the PBS reforms

Please visit www.medicareaustralia.gov.au > Health care providers or call Medicare Australia on 132 290*.

For fact sheets about the PBS reforms

Please visit www.health.gov.au/pbsreform or call the Department of Health and Ageing on 1800 020 613**.

* Call charges may apply.
** Call charges apply for mobile or pay phones only.