

Frequently asked questions

How fast is online claiming for PBS?

Typical response times are less than five seconds from the time you transmit to Medicare Australia to the time you receive a response from Medicare Australia. Each prescription dispensing software works differently but all vendors ensure that the workflow of the pharmacy is not disrupted. In most cases, this means that the software will not interrupt the dispensing process, unless there is an error that needs correcting, so you can continue dispensing prescriptions while waiting for a response from Medicare Australia for previous prescriptions.

Most of the response speed will depend on your internet connection, the way your prescription dispensing software works and your computer.

Is online claiming for PBS secure?

The protection of personal information is critical to online claiming for PBS. To ensure the privacy and security requirements are met for the electronic transfer of personal information, online claiming for PBS is enabled using Public Key Infrastructure (PKI). PKI ensures that when information is transmitted over the internet, everything contained within the electronic message is encrypted and only the people the information is intended for can access it.

What happens if my communications go down?

If your communications go down—regardless if it is an internet service provider, software or Medicare Australia issue—you will still be able to continue dispensing prescriptions and the information will be stored in your software. When communications come back up, the software will automatically send the stored transactions to Medicare Australia and they will be marked to show that communications were down at the time the PBS/RPBS medicine was dispensed.

What happens if the patient doesn't pick up the medicine?

You can cancel the prescription in your software, as you do now. If you have not yet been paid by Medicare Australia, there will be no further action. If Medicare Australia has already paid you for that item, the amount will be automatically deducted from your next payment.

Do I still have to send in the paper prescriptions?

You will still need to send in paper prescriptions to Medicare Australia at the end of your claim period for audit and verification. You will also need to send in paper prescriptions for high-cost or high-risk items before receiving payment. The frequency in which you submit the paper prescriptions to Medicare Australia is the same as your previous arrangements (e.g. once a month).

How often do I get paid?

Online claiming for PBS provides the pharmacy with weekly payments for prescriptions which have been electronically approved for payment. At the end of the claiming cycle, after Medicare Australia has received the associated claims paperwork, payments will be made for any outstanding high-cost or high-risk items.

Medicare Australia reserves the right to make adjustments or rejections when paperwork is received according to quality assurance procedures where the electronic and paper prescription do not match.

Where to from here?

For more information on online claiming for PBS, visit Medicare Australia's website at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/providers or call Medicare Australia on 132 290.

Online claiming for PBS
A better business solution



Online claiming for PBS: a better business solution

What is online claiming for PBS?

Online claiming for PBS is an improved claiming solution that allows you to submit a claim to Medicare Australia each time you dispense a PBS/RPBS medicine. Medicare Australia performs a series of checks, including a check on customer entitlement, with the result returned almost immediately. Any errors or inconsistencies can be corrected before you supply the medicine to the customer.

Benefits

Online claiming for PBS gives you faster and better ways to claim by:

- > flagging potential rejections at the point of dispensing, allowing any errors to be corrected before the customer leaves the pharmacy
- > giving you more certainty of the amount that Medicare Australia will pay before the medicine is supplied to the customer
- > paying you more frequently
- > sending electronic statements that are automatically reconciled by your dispensing software.

How online claiming for PBS works

The following steps are involved when you make a claim:

1. The customer presents you with a PBS/RPBS prescription.
2. You enter the information about the prescription into your prescription dispensing software.
3. The prescription dispensing software sends a transaction to Medicare Australia at the same time the medicine is dispensed.
4. Medicare Australia checks the details of the prescription against PBS/RPBS rules including patient entitlement checks.

5. Medicare Australia sends a message to inform you whether the claim is payable — this is the claim for payment.
6. The medicine is supplied to the customer.
7. At the end of your pharmacy's claiming cycle (claim period), you send the paper prescriptions to Medicare Australia for audit and verification processing as you do now.

In some cases, you will need to correct an error or omission before resubmitting the claim to Medicare Australia for payment. This can be done before you supply the medicine to the customer.

There will also be some cases where Medicare Australia will not make a payment until it has seen the paper prescription. This typically involves high-cost or high-risk items.

How to become ready to claim online

To use online claiming for PBS you will need to complete the following steps:

1. Confirm with your software vendor that they have online functionality available in the prescription dispensing software you use.
2. Access Medicare Australia's website at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/providers - print and complete the Pharmacy Participation Agreement for online claiming for PBS. It is important that all approved pharmacists in relation to your pharmacy sign the Pharmacy Participation Agreement.
3. Return the completed Pharmacy Participation Agreement to:

PBS Approvals Clerk
GPO Box 9826
In your capital city

Medicare Australia will then complete the registration process and issue you with a digital certificate for security purposes.

Minimum system requirements

You will need a computer which has the following:

- > A Pentium II processor or better.
- > 128Mb RAM, 50Mb spare space on Hard Disk.
- > 3.5" floppy disk drive and CD ROM drive.
- > Windows 98, NT, 2000 or XP operating systems.
- > An internet connection (does not have to be broadband).
- > Internet protection tools, such as virus protection and a firewall, are also recommended.

Costs

Online claiming for PBS is provided free of charge to software vendors to integrate into their prescription dispensing software. However, you will need to talk to your software vendor about their maintenance and support charges for upgrades to the prescription dispensing software.

Pharmacies will be responsible for costs associated with connecting to the internet but you will not need to pay Medicare Australia for online support.

Software vendors integrating online claiming for PBS

Software vendors need a notice of integration before they are permitted to communicate with any Medicare Australia system to ensure the prescription dispensing software meets the online claiming for PBS requirements. To see which vendors have integrated online claiming for PBS into their prescription dispensing software and have received a notice of integration from Medicare Australia, visit Medicare Australia's website at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/vendors