



Taking and sending Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme medicine overseas

Many types of medicine cost more than the price you pay—some cost hundreds of dollars. Through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), the Australian Government subsidises the cost of a wide range of prescription medicine.

All Australian residents have access to affordable medicine through the PBS. PBS medicine is also available to eligible visitors from Italy, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, Finland, Norway, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden, Belgium and the United Kingdom. Australia has Reciprocal Health Care Agreements with these countries.

It is illegal to take or send PBS subsidised medicine out of Australia for reasons other than personal use or the personal use of someone travelling from Australia with you e.g. a child. There are also restrictions on the amount of PBS medicine you can take or send overseas.

People who are found to be dealing with a PBS medicine in a way other than which it was meant risk a fine of up to \$5000 and/or two years imprisonment.

Taking PBS medicine overseas

If you're planning a trip overseas, it is important that you take your prescription medicine with you so that you remain in good health while you are away. It is also important to check that your medicine is not considered illegal in the country you are travelling to.

If you are taking PBS medicine overseas for your personal use or the use of someone travelling with you, you should:

- talk to your doctor and discuss the medicine you will need to take with you
- contact the embassy of the country you are visiting to ensure the medicine is legal there
- carry a letter from your doctor detailing what the medicine is, how much you will be taking and stating that it is for your own personal use
- keep the medicine in its original packaging so it is clearly labelled with your name and dosage instructions.

Sending PBS medicine overseas

If you are planning to send PBS medicine overseas for your own personal use while overseas, or for the personal use of someone travelling from Australia with you, you should:

- talk to your doctor and discuss the medicine you will need to send
- contact the embassy of the country you are visiting to ensure the medicine is legal there

- enclose a letter from your doctor in the package outlining the details of the medicine, why you are sending it and stating that it is for your personal use
- keep the medicine in its original packaging so it is clearly labelled with your name and dosage instructions
- attach a completed Customs declaration, available from any post office, to your parcel stating that the package contains prescription medicine that is for your personal use.

Giving PBS medicine to family or friends that has not been prescribed for them, is not only against the law, but may endanger their health. It can be dangerous to take medicine that is past its use-by date, or medicine that has not been prescribed specifically for you.

For more information

Online **www.medicareaustralia.gov.au**

Email **pbs@medicareaustralia.gov.au**

Call **1800 500 147**** (Information on sending or taking PBS medication overseas)

1800 020 613** (PBS general enquiry line)

TTY **1800 552 152**** (hearing or speech impaired)

TIS **131 450*** (Translating and Interpreting Service)

* Call charges apply.

** Call charges apply from mobile and pay phones only.