

How much does your PBS prescription cost?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do some prescriptions cost more than the cap?

For some medicines there are multiple brands available and there may be a price difference between different brands.

This price difference is an extra cost which is agreed between the Australian Government and the medicine company and is called a Brand Premium.

This extra cost is ultimately paid to the medicine company, as the pharmacist pays this extra cost when they buy the medicine.

Your pharmacist must charge the extra cost when dispensing a prescription for a medicine with a Brand Premium.

The Brand Premium can make the price of the medicine higher than the PBS price cap.

If there is a Brand Premium on your prescribed medicine, you may be able to request another brand (often referred to as a generic medicine) which does not have the extra cost.

Your pharmacist can advise you further about Brand Premiums and generic medicines.

Why are there different prices for some PBS prescriptions?

While the standard PBS price cap for people is \$42.50, there are some PBS medicines which cost less. This is because the cost for the pharmacy to buy and dispense the medicine is less than \$42.50.

Pharmacies can decide how much they charge when dispensing these PBS medicines and they may include some extra fees to cover their costs. The extra fees include a fee of \$1.29 (for ready prepared medicines) for keeping Safety Net records and an Allowable Fee of up to \$4.42. This recognises that individual pharmacies can have different business and operational costs such as rent, wages, utilities, or insurance.

Importantly, while the pharmacy can decide the price it charges for these medicines, it cannot exceed the standard price cap of \$42.50. For the script to remain a PBS script that counts towards the PBS safety net threshold, the additional charges are capped at \$5.71 for ready prepared medicines.

You may ask your pharmacist about the price of your medicines prior to dispensing.

Further information for fees and charges for pharmaceutical benefit prescriptions is available online.

Where can I get further information about this?

The Australian Government has a website with more information about the medicines it subsidises through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and a list of the prices for all PBS medicines –

www.pbs.gov.au

Ask your pharmacist if you have any questions about the price of your medicine.

