



Providing Aftercare Services in General Practice

From 1 November 2017, Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) rebates will be available for general practitioner (GP) consultations performed during the aftercare period, where the operation was performed by another practitioner.

For example, where a patient has surgery provided by another practitioner, but returns to the GP for removal of sutures, billing of a consultation item through the MBS will now be permitted.

If the initial procedure is performed by a general practitioner, normal aftercare rules apply to any post-operative service provided by the same practitioner.

What is aftercare?

Aftercare is deemed to include all post-operative treatment rendered by medical specialists and consultant physicians, and includes all attendances until recovery from the operation, the final check or examination, regardless of whether the attendances are at the hospital, private rooms, or the patient's home.

Whilst aftercare is usually provided by the medical practitioner who performed the procedure, for some patients this care is provided by another medical practitioner. A medical practitioner can be regarded as a general practitioner, doctor or medical specialist.

Any aftercare associated with a cosmetic procedure or non-Medicare service does not attract a Medicare benefit.

Video consultations, including telehealth, are subject to the same aftercare rules as face to face consultations.

What is the aftercare period?

The amount and duration of the aftercare may vary by patient and by procedure, but includes all attendances until recovery from the operation.

Aftercare and the schedule fee

Medicare benefits for routine aftercare are included in the MBS for most surgical items, operations, procedures, fractures and dislocations.

Where there may be doubt as to whether an item includes aftercare, check the item description for the words '*including aftercare*'.

For example:

MBS item 35602:
'Stress incontinence, combined synchronous abdomino-vaginal operation for abdominal procedure, with or without mesh, (*including aftercare*)...'

Where 'excluding aftercare' or similar is listed, benefits are payable for clinically relevant post-operative attendances.

For example:

MBS item 30219:
'Haematoma, furuncle, small abscess or similar lesion not requiring admission to a hospital, incision with drainage of, *excluding aftercare*...'

Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this document, this information is a guide only and subject to change without notice.

Practice Assist is an initiative of



WA Primary Health Alliance is supported by funding from the Australian Government under the PHN Program.

Rural Health West is funded by the Australian Government and the WA Country Health Service.

Consultations billed in the aftercare period

If a service is provided during the aftercare period for a condition not related to the operation, then this can be claimed through the MBS, provided the account identifies the service as 'Not normal aftercare', with a brief explanation of the reason for the additional services.

For online claims, it can be indicated by:

- Setting the Aftercare Override Indicator in the practice software; or
- Submitting the claim using the Patient Claim Store and Forward (PCS) channel. Add 'not normal aftercare' in the service text. Notations include:
 - Not Normal Aftercare
 - NNAC
 - NNA

Admitted hospital patients

Private patient in a private or public hospital

No Medicare benefits are paid for aftercare when it is provided by the medical practitioner who performed the original operation.

Public patient in a public hospital

All care directly related to in-patient care, including routine and non-routine aftercare, is provided free of charge as part of the public hospital service.

However, where a public patient independently chooses to consult a different private medical practitioner for aftercare, then any post-operative care attracts a Medicare benefit.

References

Information in this fact sheet has been taken from the Australian Government Department of Human Services website and the Medicare Benefits Schedule and is current at the time of printing.

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals/enablers/education-guide-aftercare-or-post-operative-treatment>

<http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/Downloads-201711>

More information

For more information on aftercare, see the MBS note AN.0.71 General practitioner attendances and Aftercare and TN.8.4 Aftercare (Post-operative Treatment).

Enquiries about services not listed or matters of interpretation should be directed to Medicare Australia on:

Telephone: 13 21 50

Email: askMBS@humanservices.gov.au