



Information for patients in methadone or buprenorphine programs

Information on changes from 1 July 2023

- As of 1 July 2023, if you were in a methadone or buprenorphine program you can pay for your medicines the same way as other Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines from your pharmacy on prescription from your prescriber.
- This includes methadone and buprenorphine brands Suboxone®, Subutex®, Bupival® and Sublocade®.
- The aim of this change is to make these medicines more affordable for people across Australia.
- Community pharmacies can not charge you daily fees for your dose.
- You will pay the PBS co-payment for a month of your medicine which will count towards your PBS Safety Net.

What will you pay for your methadone or buprenorphine through the PBS?

Community pharmacies must not charge you daily dosing fees. Instead, the pharmacist will charge you a PBS co-payment once a month for your methadone or buprenorphine prescription. The PBS co-payment that you will pay is up to \$31.60 for general patients or \$7.70 if you have a concession card.

For most people, the PBS co-payment fee will cover 28 days' supply of your medicine that the pharmacist will continue to provide to you as a supervised dose or as a take-away dose as instructed by your prescriber (doctor or nurse practitioner).

If you are taking two different strengths of buprenorphine (Suboxone® or Subutex®), you will need to pay one PBS co-payment for each strength of the prescribed medicines. For example, if your doctor prescribes you both the 2mg and 8mg for your dose, you will pay one co-payment for each. However, each prescription will count towards your PBS Safety Net record and if you usually reach the Safety Net, you will reach it sooner.

Will methadone and buprenorphine prescriptions count towards my PBS Safety Net?

Yes. The amount you pay for methadone and buprenorphine prescriptions for the treatment of opioid dependence will count towards your PBS Safety Net just like other medicines on the PBS. Once you or your family spend a certain amount on PBS medicines, you'll reach the PBS Safety Net threshold. The PBS Safety Net helps you pay less for medicines after you've reached a certain amount in a calendar year.

There is a general and a concessional PBS Safety Net threshold, and these may change on the first of January each year. You can find the current PBS Safety Net Threshold amounts [here](#).

Once you reach the threshold, your medicine will then either be free for concession card holders or cost up to \$7.70 for general patients.

Please talk to your pharmacist about recording the supply of your methadone or buprenorphine on your prescription (Safety Net) record form. Further information on the PBS Safety Net thresholds is available from [Services Australia](#).

Who is eligible to receive benefits under the PBS?

If you are an Australian resident and you hold a current Medicare card, then you are eligible to receive benefits under the PBS. If you do not have a Medicare card, you can learn how to get, use, and replace your card by contacting Services Australia. More information is available at this link: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare-card

If you require assistance with getting a Medicare card, we also encourage you to speak to your doctor, pharmacist, peer or support worker.