

Revised PBS listings for Antibiotic use

Commencing 1 May 2020, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listings for antibiotics will be amended.

The top five most commonly prescribed PBS-listed antibiotic medications were amended on 1 April 2020 to encourage appropriate prescribing and use, following the recommendation of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) at the August 2019 meeting.

However, in acknowledgement of the clinical circumstances where patients require lifelong or prolonged antibiotic treatment, the PBAC has recommended to the Minister that the PBS listings for the affected antibiotics require updating on 1 May 2020 to provide for PBS-subsidised treatment of these patient groups.

What does this change involve?

As of 1 May 2020, the Authority Required (STREAMLINED) PBS listings of amoxicillin, amoxicillin with clavulanic acid, cefalexin and roxithromycin have been amended to allow patients who require prolonged oral antibiotic therapy to access an increased maximum quantity and/or repeat(s), regardless of whether they were initiated on intravenous antibiotic therapy.

What does this change mean for prescribers?

For the amended and new Authority Required (STREAMLINED) antibiotic listings, prescribers are required to include a valid 'streamlined authority code' on the authority prescription. The 'streamlined authority code' is located on the relevant PBS listing on the PBS website.

Where increased quantities or repeats are required, prescribers are required to contact Services Australia on 1800 888 333.

What does this change mean for pharmacists?

For the amended or new Authority Required (STREAMLINED) antibiotic listings, a 'streamlined authority code' must be included on the authority prescription from 1 May 2020. Pharmacists are required to ensure that any dispensed scripts have a valid streamlined authority code, which needs to be valid at the date of prescribing. Further, pharmacists should refer to warnings and payment rejections from Services Australia while dispensing antibiotic prescriptions in these circumstances.

For more information about the dispensing or claiming of PBS drugs, please call Services Australia on 132 290 or visit the Services Australia or PBS websites: www.servicesaustralia.gov.au or www.pbs.gov.au.