Blood Product Services FAQs

Last updated: 07 October 2020

- This change is effective from 1 November 2020.
- A factsheet summarising what the change is, why the change has been made, how it will affect stakeholders and what they need to do is available on MBS Online at http://www.mbsonline.gov.au/internet/mbsonline/publishing.nsf/Content/factsheets
- More information about the change is provided below, in response to frequently asked questions. If you cannot find the information you need, please contact the Department of Health at askMBS@health.gov.au.
- Information is also available in the quick reference guide and claiming examples sheet.
- To subscribe to future MBS Online updates, visit www.mbsonline.gov.au and click 'Subscribe'.

Why are the changes being made?

Changes to the MBS items for blood products were recommended following a comprehensive review by clinicians, health system experts, and consumers.

The changes were announced in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) 2019-20 and recommended because:

- The changes improve clarity to encourage high value health care and prevent misuse.
- The revised blood product items better describe the scope of conditions treatable based on contemporary evidence-based best practice.
- The changes will help to ensure the MBS provides clarification on appropriate use and align the MBS with the National Blood Authority and international guidelines.

These changes result from a review by the MBS Review Taskforce, which was informed by the Blood Products Working Group, a subcommittee of the Pathology Clinical Committee. More information about the Taskforce and associated Committees is available on the Medicare Benefits Schedule Review page in the consumer section of the Department of Health website (www.health.gov.au).

How have these changes been communicated to stakeholders?

The Department circulated communication materials (including factsheets about the changes) to effected professional groups in September 2020 and encouraged dissemination of these materials to other members and fellows. Information was also made available through the MBS website (www.mbsonline.gov.au).

Frequently asked Questions

Claiming changes to MBS blood product items

Are there any new items to claim?

No new blood product services items have been added to subgroup 8 (Haematology) of Group T1 (Miscellaneous Therapeutic Procedures).

What happened to item 13709 – Collection of blood for autologous transfusion.

Use of item 13709 is no longer considered best practice.

It has been removed to discourage its use.

With the deletion of item 13709, which item/s should be claimed?

Item 13709 has been determined to be no longer clinically appropriate.

For transfusions of blood already collected, item 13706 is appropriate to claim.

For intra-operative autologous blood transfusion, item 13703 should be claimed.

Why has item 13703 been amended?

Item 13703's description was updated to better reflect the intent of the item and to clarify appropriate use.

This change will accord item 13703 with best practice in accordance with the Patient Blood Management Guidelines from the National Blood Authority.

Can anaesthetists claim item 13703?

Anaesthetists are currently able to claim item 13703 and will be be able to continue to do so after 1 November 2020.

Can I use item 13703 to claim Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) injections or iron injections/infusions?

Item 13703 cannot be used for PRP injections or for iron injections/infusions.

As of 1 January 2015, due to changes in legislation, PRP injections no longer attract a Medicare rebate.

The rebates were removed based on advice from medical professional groups that autologous blood injection services, such as PRP injections, lack scientific evidence of their safety and effectiveness.

Item 13703 cannot be used when infusing iron (commonly Ferrinject).

There is no specific item for iron infusion services under the MBS at this time.

Why is there a new explanatory note regarding in vitro processing and cryopreservation of bone marrow or peripheral blood?

Changes have been made to the descriptor of item 13760 to better describe the scope of cancerous conditions claimable and clarify contemporary clinical best practice. The changes encourage high quality, contemporary care.

To provide more guidance, an explanatory note has been made.

The explanatory note explains the service requirements in more detail and outline the range of requirements needed to bill the service, as well as the international guidelines for the treatment.

Where can I find more information?

To assist you in navigating the new schedule, the quick reference guide outlines the amended items and relevant explanatory notes. If you are using a downloaded PDF version of the MBS, an index of services is provided within each category to assist you in locating the appropriate item number for the service provided.

The full item descriptors and information on other changes to the MBS can be found on the MBS Online website at www.mbsonline.gov.au. You can also subscribe to future MBS updates by visiting MBS Online and clicking 'Subscribe'.

Please note that the information provided is a general guide only. It is ultimately the responsibility of treating practitioners to use their professional judgment to determine the most clinically appropriate services to provide, and then to ensure that any services billed to Medicare fully meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the legislation.

This sheet is current as of the Last updated date shown above, and does not account for MBS changes since that date.