



MBS items for immunisation (10993) and wound management (10996) services provided by a practice nurse

On 1 February 2004, as part of the “Strengthening Medicare” package, the Australian Government introduced new Medicare rebates, payable through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), for a practice nurse to provide immunisation and wound management services on behalf of a GP.

The Australian Government has committed \$104.1 million over the five years to 2007/08 to immunisation and wound management services.

Who can claim the immunisation and wound management items?

Items 10993 and 10996 can only be claimed by a GP for an immunisation or wound management service that is provided by a practice nurse on behalf of the GP.

All vocationally registered and non-vocationally registered GPs are eligible to claim items 10993 and 10996. This includes GPs working in Aboriginal Medical Services that have Medicare claiming arrangements.

What is a practice nurse?

A practice nurse is a registered or enrolled nurse, employed by, or whose services are retained by, a general practice. The general practice may be either accredited or non-accredited.

The practice nurse must be appropriately qualified and trained to provide the immunisation or wound management service and must also comply with any relevant legislative or regulatory requirements.

Item 10993

Immunisation provided to a person by a practice nurse if:

- (a) the immunisation service is provided on behalf of, and under the supervision of, a medical practitioner; and
- (b) the immunisation is provided:
 - in the consulting rooms of a general practice; or
 - in a residential aged care facility; or
 - during a home visit to the person; or
 - in an institution (other than a hospital or day-hospital facility).

Item 10993 only applies where:

- (a) the practice nurse is appropriately qualified and trained to provide immunisations; and
- (b) the medical practitioner under whose supervision the immunisation is provided retains responsibility for the health, safety and clinical outcomes of the person.

Which immunisations are covered by Medicare item 10993?

An immunisation is the administration of a registered vaccine, under the *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*, to a patient (child or adult), for any purpose except mass immunisations.

All vaccines on the Australian Standard Vaccination Schedule and vaccines in the Australian Immunisation Handbook 8th Edition, 2003 are covered by item 10993.

The following substances cannot be claimed under this item:

- vaccines used experimentally;
- homeopathic substances;
- immunotherapy for allergy, eg de-sensitisation preparations; and
- other substances that are not vaccines.

There may also be state/territory limitations on the administration of some vaccines, such as those for tuberculosis, Yellow Fever and Q-fever.

Item 10993 does not apply to mass immunisations.

Subsection 19(4) of the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, prevents the payment of Medicare benefits in relation to mass immunisations. Item 10993 cannot be claimed for services provided in locations typically associated with mass immunisations, such as schools, workplaces, shopping centres, public health clinics, etc.

Does the GP need to be present during the immunisation service?

No. The GP does not need to be present at the time of the immunisation. It is at the GP's discretion whether they need to see the patient prior to the immunisation being administered by the practice nurse. Where this occurs, the GP is eligible to claim for the professional service they provide to the patient.

Can the immunisation item be claimed more than once if more than one vaccine is administered during the same patient visit?

No. The immunisation item can only be claimed once per patient visit, even if more than one vaccine is administered during the same patient visit.

Does the immunisation item affect existing immunisation payments?

No. Service Incentive Payments (SIP) currently received as part of the General Practice Immunisation Incentives (GPII) Scheme and notification payments received through the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) are unaffected by the immunisation item.

Item 10996

Treatment of a person's wound (other than normal aftercare) provided by a practice nurse if:

- (a) the treatment is provided on behalf of, and under the supervision of, a medical practitioner; and
- (b) the person is not an admitted patient of a hospital or day-hospital facility.

Item 10996 only applies where:

- (a) the practice nurse is appropriately qualified and trained to treat wounds; and
- (b) the medical practitioner under whose supervision the treatment is provided has conducted an initial assessment of the person; and
- (c) the practice nurse has been instructed by the medical practitioner in relation to the treatment of the wound; and
- (d) the medical practitioner retains responsibility for the health, safety and clinical outcomes of the person.

What is wound management?

Wound management is the ongoing management of a wound, after an initial assessment of the patient, by the GP. Wound management excludes any normal post-operative aftercare.

Does the GP need to be present during the wound management service?

No. The GP does not need to be present during the treatment of the wound. However, the GP must conduct an initial assessment of the patient in order to give instruction in relation to the treatment of the wound.

Where a practice nurse provides ongoing wound management, the GP is not required to see the patient during each subsequent visit.

Can the wound management item be claimed more than once if more than one wound is managed during the same patient visit?

No. The wound management item can only be claimed once per patient visit, even if more than one wound is managed during the same patient visit.

What is the level of the Medicare rebate for the immunisation and wound management items?

The Medicare rebate for items 10993 and 10996 is paid at 100% of the schedule fee. The Medicare rebate is currently \$10.40 (from 1 November 2005).

Is the GP still able to claim for their own professional service?

Yes. The GP can claim for both their own professional service and the service provided by the practice nurse.

Where a consultation has taken place with the patient first, the GP is only eligible to claim a Medicare item for the length of time that the GP spends with the patient. The time the practice nurse spends with the patient is claimed separately under the practice nurse item.

Can a bulk billing incentive (items 10990 or 10991) be claimed in conjunction with an immunisation or wound management item?

Yes. The bulk billing incentive items (10990 and 10991) which apply to bulk billed services provided to Commonwealth concession card holders and children under 16 years of age, can be claimed in conjunction with an immunisation or wound management item.

Further information

For further information, visit the Medicare Australia website at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/medicareinitiatives or call Medicare Australia on 132 150.

Information on these items is also available in the 1 November 2005 edition of the Medicare Benefits Schedule Book.