



## Background

From 1 February 2021, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation PBS (RPBS) prescriptions have been required to include medicine's active ingredient name(s), except for:

- Handwritten prescriptions and medication charts
- Paper based medication charts in the residential aged care setting
- Prescriptions generated using a 'free-text' function in prescribing software
- Prescriptions for medicines with four or more active ingredients
- Other items as determined by the Secretary.

Prescribers are still able to choose a specific brand of medicine for their patient and can include brand names on prescriptions wherever clinically necessary for their patient. If a brand name is included on a prescription, the active ingredient must appear first.

To ensure consumer access to PBS/RPBS subsidised medicines during the transition, and to support pharmacies, the Department of Health agreed to a six-month grace period for pharmacy that ends on 31 July 2021.

Active Ingredient Prescribing (AIP) is part of a wider government initiative to ensure consistent and standardised medicines information to support safe and appropriate use of medicines. Active ingredients must now prominently appear on prescriptions, medicines packaging, dispensing labels and My Health Record Shared Health Summaries to support consumer understanding of the active ingredients in their medicines.

## What Prescribers need to know

- From 1 August 2021, new PBS and RPBS prescriptions that do not meet active ingredient prescribing requirements cannot be dispensed as PBS/RPBS prescriptions, and will need to be reissued in alignment with active ingredient prescribing requirements, or dispensed as private prescriptions (with associated out of pocket costs to consumers).
- Prescriptions and repeats prescribed prior to 1 August 2021 which do not meet AIP requirements are still eligible for PBS/RPBS subsidy.

## What Prescribers need to do

- **Upgrade prescribing software** – make sure you have updated your software to the latest version that supports Active Ingredient Prescribing (AIP), to ensure you are generating valid prescriptions.
- **Prescription accuracy** – after printing prescriptions, ensure all details are accurate, are PBS/RPBS compliant, and all necessary instructions and information is available for pharmacists.
- **Patient understanding** – support patients to understand the change to their prescriptions, and the active ingredients in their medicines.
- **Stay up to date** - with communications from clinical peak organisations and your software provider, and watch for any future updates to your prescribing software.

## Additional Information

- Clinical Support Materials including an AIP User Guide, List of Medicines for Brand Consideration and List of Excluded Medicinal Items are available on the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's [website](#).
- Fact Sheets, FAQ pages and other resources for prescribers, pharmacists and consumers are available on the [NPS MedicineWise](#) and [PBS](#) websites.

## Queries

Any questions regarding Active Ingredient Prescribing can be sent to [AIPrescribing@health.gov.au](mailto:AIPrescribing@health.gov.au).