

# Information Sheet:

## Medicare Benefits for people 25 years old and over

This information sheet is about how to access Medicare benefits for autism therapies for people who are 25 years old and over.

Medicare is a national body that subsidises primary health care in Australia. Medicare provides a rebate on the cost of seeing a doctor. You can also get a special plan to claim a Medicare rebate to see other kinds of health professionals, like therapists. This information sheet lists the most relevant plans for Autistic people.

Usually, Medicare will only refund part of the cost of service. That means you will have a gap that you need to pay yourself. If you end up paying a lot for medical services in one year, you may reach the Medicare Safety Net. This means you get a higher rebate for Medicare-subsidised services.

When you approach the safety net, Medicare will notify you. You need to register with Medicare, so they know to count the Medicare expenses together. For more information, look on the [Medicare website](#) or call Medicare on 13 20 11.

The Medicare plans covered in this information sheet are:

- **The Chronic Disease Management Plan**
- **The Better Access to Mental Health Plan**

It's important to see therapists who have knowledge and understanding of autism. You can ask the referring doctor or contact the therapist. You should ask them whether they have experience working with Autistic people and their families.

### Chronic Disease Management Plan

*Previously called Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) plan*

The Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Plan provides:

- Five sessions with an Allied Health Professional per calendar year (see below for a list of professionals who are considered Allied Health Professionals).

Autistic people are eligible for the Chronic Disease Management Plan because Autistic people may require ongoing support from a multidisciplinary team.

# Medicare Benefits for people 25 years old and over

## Allied Health Professionals

- Aboriginal Health Workers
- Audiologists
- Chiropractors
- Diabetes Educators
- Dietitians
- Exercise Physiologists
- Mental Health Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Osteopaths
- Physiotherapists
- Podiatrists
- Psychologists
- Speech Pathologists



Your General Practitioner (GP) can write the Chronic Disease Management Plan. Autistic people are eligible for 5 sessions every calendar year. Once you have the initial plan, the GP will not need to write a new plan each year, but may review the plan.

## **Better Access to Mental Health Plan** *Also known as Mental Health Care Plan*

This plan provides (per calendar year):

- 10 sessions of individual therapy with a psychologist, occupational therapist, or social worker.
- 10 group sessions of therapy with a psychologist, occupational therapist, or social worker.

The Better Access to Mental Health Care plan is available for anybody (Autistic individuals, parents, siblings, carers etc.). It's for anybody who feels that their wellbeing and mental health is at risk.

Mental illness is common. Around 1 in 5 Australians will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives. Many things may affect your mental health, such as chemical imbalances in the brain, exposure to trauma, family environments, cumulative stress, and difficult life events.

Any family members who are feeling sad, confused, depressed or anxious should see their GP. The GP can refer professionals to support them, such as social workers or counsellors.

Autistic people are more likely than the general population to have a mental health condition, for example, anxiety or depression. Individuals can access the Better Access to Mental Health Care Plan and seek support from the appropriate professionals.

# Medicare Benefits for people 25 years old and over

You can use the group sessions for or any group run by the listed professionals. These can include social skills groups, play therapy groups, and anxiety groups. The group must be building confidence, self-esteem and ability for the autistic person.

You're eligible for up to 10 sessions under the Better Access to Mental Health plan every calendar year. You can get a referral from your GP. Make sure you book a long appointment with your doctor. This is to allow enough time to prepare a GP Mental Health Care Plan and discuss your treatment options. A psychiatrist or paediatrician can also write this referral.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. Can I use all these at the same time?**

**A. Yes!**

**Q. Who can write the referrals?**

**A.** The Better Access to Mental Health referral can also be written by a paediatrician or psychiatrist, but are more commonly written by a GP. The Chronic Disease Management referrals can only be written by your GP.

**Q. Are these sessions free of cost?**

**A.** No – you will receive a rebate from Medicare. This rebate does not cover the total cost of the service. Please check with Medicare for the amount you will receive.

## Acknowledgements

This information sheet was developed in consultation with Autistic people.

©2023 Amaze

Permission is granted for the content of this information sheet to be reproduced in its entirety, provided Amaze is acknowledged as the source. Content is provided for educational and information purposes only. Information about a therapy, service, product or treatment does not imply endorsement and is not intended to replace advice from your doctor or other registered health professional.