

PREP IS ON THE PBS... ...NOW WHAT?

WHAT IS THE PBS?

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (*PBS*) is a government program to make medications affordable.

Under the *PBS*, **you pay a small proportion (a 'co-payment') of the cost of your medication** and the Government pays the rest. This makes ordinarily expensive medications –like PrEP– more affordable for those of us who need it.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PREP?

On February 9th 2018 the advisory committee that decides which medications to subsidise recommended for pre-exposure prophylaxis (*PrEP*) to be subsidised by the PBS.

This means **affordable PrEP will soon be available at your local pharmacy** - previously PrEP cost hundreds of dollars a month. This means people don't need to be on a limited clinical study or need to import it from overseas.

HOW MUCH WILL PREP COST?

The price of PrEP on the PBS will vary depending on your circumstances. You will need to have a Medicare card.

For most people, a **3 months supply of PrEP will cost \$118.50**. You'll pay less if you have a concession* or are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (*ATSI*) person.

	[WITH MEDICARE]	[ATSI]
Full (<i>per month</i>)	\$39.50	\$6.40
Full (<i>per script</i>)	\$118.50	\$19.20
Concession* (<i>per month</i>)	\$6.40	FREE
Concession* (<i>per script</i>)	\$19.20	FREE

*Anyone who has a Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, or a DVA White, Gold, or Orange Card.

WHEN CAN I GET PREP?

Soon! Details on the date you'll be able to walk into your local pharmacy to pick up low cost PrEP are still to follow. **We expect that will be in the next few months.** For now, this is a great step in the right direction to ensuring equal PrEP access across the country, not just in small areas of each state.



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ISN'T PREP MORE EXPENSIVE?

Possibly. Some states with clinical studies of PrEP have enabled free or reduced cost PrEP. Essentially they get to set their own price. The PBS is the same no matter what.

The new PBS price might be a shift for you, however **the PBS subsidised price of PrEP means affordable PrEP is here to stay.**

If you are self-importing PrEP, you may be paying a different amount depending on where you purchase the medication and the exchange rate at the time.

SHOULD I STAY ON A STUDY?

Some clinical studies are due to finish soon, and will line up nicely with the availability of PBS subsidised PrEP. Some of them are due to continue for some time. Should you stay on the study? **That is completely up to you, we'd say stick with it.** You can withdraw any time; however the cost of PrEP on the studies are lower than the PBS while they are running.

When it's time for your last study appointment, talk with your doctor about continuing PrEP.

You can remain with the same GP, or you can find another not part of the study if you wish. Some studies are even still enrolling participants: find out

more on

pan.org.au/studies

I'M IMPORTING, SHOULD I SWITCH?

Both have benefits. If you import PrEP, you'll have access to the lowest cost imported PrEP ever. The cost of PrEP online will change depending on the dollar exchange rate. You'll also need to wait for it to arrive in the post. This is only about a week or so.

The choice is yours.

If you buy PrEP locally, you'll have it same-day. It will be the same price every time you buy it, but this may be *slightly* more than importing. The good thing is, once your script is in hand you can decide which road to take.

WHAT'S THE CHEAPEST WAY?

On the PBS the cheapest way to get PrEP is to have a valid concession card or to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (*see pricing table*). If not, **it is slightly cheaper to import PrEP.** Currently the price of importing PrEP is the cheapest it has ever been, at around \$32 per month including shipping.



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WHEN SHOULD I BOOK AN APPOINTMENT?

We have thousands of people on clinical studies and importing PrEP. This creates huge demand in some clinics, as they continue to support existing PrEP clients, regular sexual health screening, and people living with HIV accessing care and treatment. But, never fear!

Because PrEP can be prescribed by any GP, you don't have to visit a sexual health clinic specifically to get a PrEP script. You can visit your preferred local GP. **We recommend making an appointment for around a month before you need it.** A list of GPs we know are prescribing PrEP at:

pan.org.au/doctors

DOES MY GP KNOW ABOUT PREP?

Some do, some don't. GPs cater to a whole range of health needs for their regular patients - they can't know everything. **If they haven't prescribed PrEP before, don't worry! Put them in touch with us.** We can link them in with other regular PrEP prescribers and clinical resources like ASHM (*the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine*) which govern the guidelines on how PrEP is best prescribed, and taken.

WHAT IF I CAN'T AFFORD PREP?

If the cost of the PBS co-payment at your pharmacy is beyond your circumstances, get in touch with us for some assistance.

For anyone unable to afford the cost of importing PrEP **PAN has a coupon scheme available to provide PrEP** to anyone studying, working part time, or unable to afford the cost of PrEP for any reason.

MORE QUESTIONS?

Still got concerns or burning questions? **Get in touch with us!** We can help answer any questions you have about PrEP, the PBS, importing, general sexual health questions, and help you navigate your PrEP journey.

Ask us anything: info@pan.org.au
Facebook: [pan.org.au/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pan.org.au)
Info & coupons: pan.org.au



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