



LISTING OF REPETITIVE TRANSCRANIAL MAGNETIC STIMULATION (RTMS) ON THE MEDICARE BENEFITS SCHEDULE

What are the changes to the MBS?

From 1 November 2021, four new items for rTMS therapy prescribing and treatment services will be added to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS), following recommendations to the Australian Government from the independent Medical Services Advisory Committee.

rTMS is a form of localised brain stimulation therapy used to treat depression. The therapy involves using a magnet to target and stimulate the region of the brain involved in mood regulation and depression. rTMS provides a non-invasive form of therapy compared to other forms of treatment, such as electroconvulsive therapy.

Why are these changes being made?

The listing of rTMS services on the MBS aligns with the Australian Government's commitment to ensure Australians are able to access affordable healthcare that reflects contemporary clinical practice.

What does this mean for patients?

The introduction of the MBS items for rTMS will allow eligible patients to access subsidised Medicare rebates for rTMS treatment.

rTMS Medicare rebates will be available for eligible adults (aged 18 years and over) diagnosed with medication resistant major depressive disorder who have tried at least two different classes of antidepressant medicines but remain unwell.

Eligible patients will receive an initial course of up to 35 rTMS treatment sessions. In addition, if a patient has responded positively to the initial treatment course, but has subsequently relapsed, a retreatment course of up to 15 sessions will be available on the MBS.

The Medicare rebate will be available to patients who have not previously undertaken a course of rTMS treatment services. Medicare rebates will be available for one single course of treatment and one course of retreatment services over a patient's lifetime.

What does this mean for providers?

Providers will be able to offer Medicare subsidised rTMS services to eligible patients to support the treatment of medication resistant major depressive disorder.

Providers affected by these changes will receive further information closer to the implementation date. Further details will also be available on www.mbsonline.gov.au at that time.