



Minor updates to thoracic medicine items

Last updated: 27 October 2021

- From 1 November 2021, three thoracic medicine Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items will be amended to clarify that medical practitioners with appropriate training are able to provide respiratory function tests.
- MBS item 41904 (bronchoscopy with dilation of tracheal stricture) will be relocated to the cardio-thoracic subgroup of the MBS.
- Patients will retain access to MBS rebates for bronchoscopy with dilation of tracheal structure under a new item 38428.

What are the changes?

From 1 November 2021, there will be minor changes to the MBS items for thoracic medicine. These changes apply to:

- **Respiratory function tests** – Items 11503, 11508 and 11512 will be amended to replace the phrase ‘consultant respiratory physician’ with ‘specialist or consultant physician’. Specialists and consultant physicians who meet the expected training and clinical standards will be able to access these MBS services.
- **Bronchoscopy with dilation of tracheal stricture** – Existing item 41904 for this service will be deleted and replaced with new item 38428. This is an administrative change and will not impact MBS policy for providing this service. The new item will sit within Subgroup 6 – Cardio-Thoracic.

Why are the changes being made?

From 1 November 2021, items 11503, 11508 and 11512 will be updated to ensure specialists with an appropriate level of training can provide these services. Patients in rural and remote areas will have improved access to these services.

The allocation of a new MBS item number for bronchoscopy with dilation of tracheal stricture will enable the service to sit within MBS Subgroup 6 – Cardio-Thoracic. This subgroup better reflects the type and nature of this service.

What does this mean for practitioners?

To access items 11503, 11508 and 11512, specialists and consultant physicians must ensure they have completed a substantial course of study and training in the relevant test, which has been endorsed by a professional medical organisation. Specialists and consultant physicians should keep appropriate records of this training.

As with other MBS services, practitioners providing diagnostic tests will continue to be subject to regulatory mechanisms designed to protect patients and maintain quality standards, such as those of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the Medical Board of Australia.

There will be no changes to the clinical requirements or policy for accessing benefits for bronchoscopy with dilation of tracheal stricture. However, practitioners will need to ensure they bill new item 38428 for this service from 1 November 2021.



How will these changes affect patients?

Patients will have continued access to clinically relevant services.

Changes to items 11503, 11508 and 11512 will enable those patients who have limited access to consultant respiratory physicians to receive these services from other specialists who have an appropriate level of training.

Changes to the billing arrangements for bronchoscopy with dilation of tracheal stricture will not affect patient access to this service. Eligible patients can continue to access rebates for this service under item 38428.

Who was consulted on the changes?

The changes were based on stakeholder feedback and progressed in consultation with relevant professional groups, including the Australian Medical Association, Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, Australian Society of Anaesthetists, and Australian and New Zealand Society of Cardiac and Thoracic Surgeons.

How will the changes be monitored and reviewed?

The Department of Health regularly reviews the usage of new and amended MBS items in consultation with the profession.

These changes will be subject to MBS compliance processes and activities, including random and targeted audits which may require a provider to submit evidence about the services claimed.

Where can I find more information?

The full item descriptor(s) and information on other changes to the MBS can be found on the MBS Online website at www.mbsonline.gov.au. You can also subscribe to future MBS updates by visiting [MBS Online](#) and clicking 'Subscribe'.

The Department of Health provides an email advice service for providers seeking advice on interpretation of the MBS items and rules and the Health Insurance Act and associated regulations. If you have a query relating exclusively to interpretation of the Schedule, you should email askMBS@health.gov.au.

Subscribe to '[News for Health Professionals](#)' on the Services Australia website and you will receive regular news highlights.

If you are seeking advice in relation to Medicare billing, claiming, payments, or obtaining a provider number, please go to the Health Professionals page on the Services Australia website or contact the Services Australia on the Provider Enquiry Line – 13 21 50.

The data file for software vendors is expected to become available on 17 September 2021 and can be accessed via the MBS Online website under the [Downloads](#) page.

Please note that the information provided is a general guide only. It is ultimately the responsibility of treating practitioners to use their professional judgment to determine the most clinically appropriate services to provide, and then to ensure that any services billed to Medicare fully meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the legislation.

This sheet is current as of the Last updated date shown above and does not account for MBS changes since that date.