



Plastic and reconstructive surgery changes - Brachial plexus items

Last updated: 10 May 2023

- From 1 July 2023 there will be changes to approximately 360 Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) items for plastic and reconstructive surgery. These changes are a result of recommendations from the MBS Review Taskforce that considered how more than 5,700 items on the MBS can be aligned with contemporary clinical evidence and practice and improve health outcomes for patients.
- The changes are summarised in the fact sheet titled “Plastic and reconstructive surgery – summary of changes” and are further detailed in individual fact sheets on specific topics. This fact sheet sets out the changes for brachial plexus services.

What are the changes?

Brachial plexus surgery is complex, and brachial plexus operations have evolved over time. Effective 1 July 2023, new items for brachial plexus surgery will be introduced, to reflect modernisation of these procedures over time and reduce the variability of item claims between providers.

- Item **39333** will be deleted as brachial plexus surgery is complex and this item does not adequately address the nature and variety of procedures performed.
- Item **39329** will be amended to remove reference to item **39333** in the co-claiming restrictions, as this item will be deleted.

New brachial plexus items will be introduced which more accurately reflect the variety of procedures performed:

- New item **46170** will be created for primary treatment of thoracic outlet syndrome.
- New item **46171** will be created for repeat (revision) treatment of thoracic outlet syndrome.
- New item **46172** will be created for removal or debulking of brachial plexus tumours, for *either* supraclavicular or infraclavicular dissection.
- New item **46173** will be created for removal or debulking of brachial plexus tumours, for *both* supraclavicular and infraclavicular dissection.
- New item **46174** will be created for exploration of the brachial plexus, *either* supraclavicular or infraclavicular.
- New item **46175** will be created for exploration of the brachial plexus, *both* supraclavicular and infraclavicular.

- New item **46176** will be created for exploration of the brachial plexus, posterior subscapular approach.
- Three new items will be created for reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, involving a single cord or trunk, to be claimed by a single surgeon performing the procedure (**46177**), by the principal surgeon performing conjoint surgery (**46178**) and by the conjoint surgeon performing conjoint surgery (**46179**).
- Three new items will be created for reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, involving more than a single cord or trunk, but less than the whole plexus, to be claimed by a single surgeon performing the procedure (**46180**), by the principal surgeon performing conjoint surgery (**46181**) and by the conjoint surgeon performing conjoint surgery (**46182**).
- Three new items will be created for reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, involving the whole plexus, to be claimed by a single surgeon performing the procedure (**46183**), by the principal surgeon performing conjoint surgery (**46184**) and by the conjoint surgeon performing conjoint surgery (**46185**).
- Explanatory Note **TN.8.270** will be created to provide further information on procedures for thoracic outlet syndrome, including guidance on co-claiming these items.

Item descriptors (to take effect 1 July 2023)

Note:

1. All fees listed include indexation which will be applied 1 July 2023.
2. The Private Health Insurance Classifications for the new and amended items are subject to final delegate approval.

Category: 3 - Therapeutic procedures
Group: T8 - Surgical Operations
Subgroup: 7 – Neurosurgical
Subheading: 3 – Peripheral Nerves
39329 (Amended) Extensive neurolysis of radial, median or ulnar nerve trunk nerve in the forearm or arm, other than a service associated with a service to which item 30023, 39303, 39309, 39312, 39315, 39318, 39324, or 39327 or 39333 applies (Anaes.) (Assist.) Fee: \$387.05 Benefit: 75% = \$290.30 85% = \$329.00 Private Health Insurance Classification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical category: Brain and nervous system • Procedure type: Type A Surgical

39333 (Deleted)

~~Brachial plexus, exploration of, other than a service to which another item in this Group applies (Anaes.) (Assist.)~~

Category: 3 - Therapeutic procedures

Group: T8 - Surgical Operations

Subgroup: 13 - Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

46170 (New)

Decompression of thoracic outlet, primary, for thoracic outlet syndrome, using any approach, including (if performed) division of scalene muscles, cervical rib and/or first rib resection (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$1,095.25 Benefit: 75% = \$821.45

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Common list**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46171 (New)

Decompression of the thoracic outlet, repeat (revision) procedure, for thoracic outlet syndrome, using any approach, including (if performed) division of scalene muscles, cervical rib and/or first rib resection (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$1861.90 Benefit: 75% = \$ 1396.45

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Common list**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46172 (New)

Removal or debulking of brachial plexus tumour, involving intraneural dissection, either supraclavicular or infraclavicular dissection (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$2738.05 Benefit: 75% = \$2053.55

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46173 (New)

Removal or debulking of brachial plexus tumour, involving intraneural dissection, both supraclavicular and infraclavicular dissection (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$3833.30 Benefit: 75% = \$2875.00

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46174 (New)

Exploration of the brachial plexus, either supraclavicular or infraclavicular, including any neurolyses performed and intraoperative neurophysiological recordings, but excluding reconstruction of elements (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$2738.05 Benefit: 75% = \$2053.55

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46175 (New)

Exploration of the brachial plexus, both supraclavicular and infraclavicular, including any neurolyses performed and intraoperative neurophysiological recordings, but excluding reconstruction of elements (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$4380.90 Benefit: 75% = \$3285.70

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46176 (New)

Exploration of the brachial plexus, posterior subscapular approach, all necessary elements of the operation including (but not limited to):

- a) resection of the first rib +/- second rib; and
- b) vertebral laminectomies or facetectomies, if performed; and
- c) any neurolyses performed; and
- d) intraoperative neurophysiological recordings

excluding the following:

- e) reconstruction of elements of the plexus;
- f) spinal instrumentation.

(H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$1095.25 Benefit: 75% = \$821.45

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46177 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, single cord or trunk, by any appropriate method, single surgeon (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$1861.90 Benefit: 75% = \$1396.45

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46178 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, single cord or trunk, by any appropriate method, conjoint surgery, principal surgeon (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$1861.90 Benefit: 75% = \$1396.45

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46179 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, single cord or trunk, by any appropriate method, conjoint surgery, conjoint surgeon (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$1549.75 Benefit: 75% = \$ 1162.35

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46180 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, more than a single cord or trunk, but less than the whole plexus, by any appropriate method, single surgeon (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$2738.05 Benefit: 75% = \$2053.55

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46181 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, more than a single cord or trunk, but less than the whole plexus, by any appropriate method (e.g. nerve grafts, vascularised nerve conduit or nerve transfers), conjoint surgery, principal surgeon (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$2738.05 Benefit: 75% = \$2053.55

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46182 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, more than a single cord or trunk, but less than the whole plexus, by any appropriate method, conjoint surgery, conjoint surgeon (H) (Anaes .) (Assist.)

Fee: \$2283.55 Benefit: 75% = \$1712.70

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46183 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, whole plexus, by any appropriate method, single surgeon (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$3285.65 Benefit: 75% = \$2464.25

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46184 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, whole plexus, by any appropriate method, conjoint surgery, principal surgeon (H) (Anaes.) (Assist.)

Fee: \$3285.65 Benefit: 75% = \$2464.25

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

46185 (New)

Reconstruction of deficit of the brachial plexus, whole plexus, by any appropriate method, conjoint surgery, conjoint surgeon (H)

Fee: \$2738.05 Benefit: 75% = \$2053.55

Private Health Insurance Classification:

- Clinical category: **Brain and nervous system**
- Procedure type: **Type A Advanced Surgical**

Explanatory Note
TN.8.270 - Procedures for Thoracic Outlet Syndrome (Items 46170 - 46185)
<p>Items 46174 and 46175 may be used as a standalone item or in conjunction with items 46177 – 46185.</p> <p>Item 46176 may be used as a standalone item or in conjunction with items 46170 – 46173.</p> <p>For items 46177, 46178 and 46179, an example of “single cord or trunk” is the upper trunk. These items are not for use for reconstruction of peripheral nerves.</p> <p>For items 46177 to 46185, examples of appropriate methods of reconstruction include nerve grafts, vascularised nerve conduit and nerve transfers.</p> <p>Related Items: 46170 to 46185</p>

Quick Reference Table

	Amended
39329	Deleted co-claiming restriction.

	New
46170	Primary treatment of thoracic outlet syndrome.
46171	Repeat (revision) treatment of thoracic outlet syndrome.
46172	Removal or debulking of brachial plexus tumours - either supraclavicular or infraclavicular.
46173	Removal or debulking of brachial plexus tumours - both supraclavicular and infraclavicular.
46174	Exploration of brachial plexus - either supraclavicular or infraclavicular.
46175	Exploration of brachial plexus - both supraclavicular and infraclavicular.
46176	Exploration of brachial plexus - posterior subscapular approach.

46177	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, single cord or trunk - single surgeon.
46178	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, single cord or trunk - principal surgeon.
46179	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, single cord or trunk - conjoint surgeon.
46180	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, more than a single cord or trunk but less than the whole plexus - single surgeon.
46181	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, more than a single cord or trunk but less than the whole plexus - principal surgeon.
46182	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, more than a single cord or trunk but less than the whole plexus - conjoint surgeon.
46183	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, whole plexus - single surgeon.
46184	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, whole plexus - principal surgeon.
46185	Reconstruction of deficit of brachial plexus, whole plexus - conjoint surgeon.

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39333	

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