



## ACTIVE INGREDIENT PRESCRIBING – CONSUMER FAQs

### What is active ingredient prescribing?

Active ingredient prescribing requires doctors to include active ingredient names on Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation PBS (RPBS) prescriptions. This will help consumers understand the medicines they are taking.

### What is an active ingredient?

Active ingredients are the ingredients in medicines that have an effect in the body. Examples include paracetamol, ibuprofen and insulin.

### How will my prescriptions change?

Most PBS and RPBS medicines will be prescribed by active ingredient. If a prescriber includes a brand name on a prescription, the active ingredient will appear first.

### What are the benefits of active ingredient prescribing?

- Supporting doctors and patients to better understand the active ingredients in their medicines;
- Reducing the risk of patients taking multiple doses of medicines;
- Encouraging pharmacists and patients to discuss generic medicines;
- Promoting the uptake of generic and biosimilar medicines;
- Decreasing out-of-pocket expenses;
- Making the PBS more sustainable; and
- Aligning Australia with international prescribing practices.

### When does it start?

Consumers will start to notice active ingredient information on their PBS and RPBS prescriptions over the coming months. All prescriptions generated after 1 February 2021 must comply with the new requirements.

### Can my doctor and I still choose specific brands?

Yes, doctors can still include a brand name on the prescription if they believe it is clinically necessary. Patients can still choose their medicine of choice at the pharmacy.

### Will this change the cost of my medicine?

There is no change in the cost of PBS or RPBS medicines. However, patients may pay less if they choose a generic or biosimilar medicine.

### Are generic medicines safe?

Yes. The Therapeutic Goods Administration carefully assess each generic medicine before it can be sold in Australia. Tests ensure it is safe and has the same effect as the original brand.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Email any queries to [aiprescribing@health.gov.au](mailto:aiprescribing@health.gov.au)