



Suspension of substitute Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items for nuclear medicine factsheet

Last updated: 28 February 2021

What are the changes?

From 28 February 2021, the eleven substitute nuclear medicine items (61311, 61332, 61365, 61377, 61380, 61418, 61422, 61333, 61336, 61337 and 61341) that became available from 1 December 2020 will cease following the full resumption of nuclear medicine production at the Lucas Heights facility of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO). With supplies of technetium at normal levels, requestors and providers of diagnostic imaging items must revert to using the technetium-based nuclear medicine imaging items set out in the *Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Services Table) Regulation (No.2) 2020*. Medicare rebates will no longer be available for any substitute item, including the substitute attenuation correction item (61344), performed after **28 February 2021**.

Why are the changes being made?

ANSTO has resumed full nuclear medicine production and is currently fulfilling all customer requirements for technetium. Given the stabilisation in supply of technetium, the substitute items that rely on alternative equipment and/or alternative radiopharmaceuticals are no longer required. ANSTO has kept customers and the nuclear medicine profession regularly informed about the availability of technetium.

What does this mean for requestors?

Where clinically indicated, requestors should continue to request current nuclear medicine imaging items that require technetium. Both general practitioners and medical specialists are eligible to request the current non-positron emission tomography nuclear medicine imaging items, set out in the *Health Insurance (Diagnostic Imaging Services Table) Regulations (No. 2) 2020*.

What does this mean for providers?

On receipt of a valid request, providers who are eligible to provide these services may render the current technetium based nuclear medicine items in the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). Providers must cease using the temporary substitute items.

How will these changes affect patients?

Patients will continue to have access to nuclear medicine imaging scans that are listed on the MBS.



Where can I find more information?

The temporary substitute nuclear medicine imaging items may re-commence in the event of a future national shortage of technetium. Announcements will be published on the Department of Health's *Nuclear Medicine and Positron Emission Tomography (PET)* webpage.

The nuclear medicine imaging items currently available for use are those set out in the Health Insurance (*Diagnostic Imaging Services Table*) Regulations (No.2) 2020, which can be downloaded from the [Federal Register of Legislation website¹](#).

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.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2020L00713>