



## Genetic testing for hydatidiform moles

Last updated: 27 October 2021

- From 1 November 2021, a new MBS item will be available for genetic testing for hydatidiform moles, to determine the presence of and inform the management of these benign or malignant growths in pregnancies.
- These changes are relevant for all medical practitioners who manage pregnancies and provide antenatal care.

### What are the changes?

Genetic testing on a piece of tissue from a hydatidiform mole can help doctors provide women with targeted treatment and advice. From 1 November 2021, a new item for analysis of products of conception from a patient with suspected hydatidiform moles for the characterisation of ploidy status will be listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

### Why are the changes being made?

In November 2019, the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) supported the creation of a new MBS item for genetic testing of products of conception from a patient with suspected hydatidiform moles for the characterisation of ploidy status. MSAC advised that the clinical utility of this service is that it provides superior patient management compared to no testing. The service allows for provision of further treatment options and advice regarding when patients can safely become pregnant again. Following the recommendation, the Australian Government agreed to public funding of a new item for analysis of products of conception from a patient with suspected hydatidiform moles for the characterisation of ploidy status as part of the 2021-22 Budget.

The item is to be listed in the *Health Insurance (Pathology Service Table) 2020*, Group 7 – Genetics.

### What does this mean for providers/referrers/other stakeholders?

Medical practitioners who manage pregnancies and provide antenatal care will be able to request genetic testing for hydatidiform moles to determine whether their patient needs to avoid pregnancy for a defined period.

To be eligible for Medicare rebates, laboratories providing this service must be accredited according to the pathology accreditation standards specified in the *Health Insurance (Accredited Pathology Laboratories-Approval) Principles 2017*.

### How will these changes affect patients?

A hydatidiform mole is a clump of sacs full of fluid that forms when something goes wrong during fertilisation (when a sperm and egg join together to create an embryo). It is also sometimes called a molar pregnancy. Molar pregnancies often end in miscarriage. Genetic testing on a piece of tissue from a hydatidiform mole can help doctors provide women with targeted treatment and advice.

### Who was consulted on the changes?



Consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders, clinical experts and providers, and consumer health representatives as part of the MSAC process, including the Royal College of Pathology Australasia.

## How will the changes be monitored and reviewed?

The new MBS items 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.

Significant variation from forecasted expenditure may warrant review and amendment of the items and fees, and incorrect use of MBS items can result in penalties including the health professional being asked to repay monies that have been incorrectly received.

## 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](http://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](mailto:askMBS@health.gov.au).

Subscribe to '[News for Health Professionals](#)' on the Department of Human Services 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 Department of Human Services website or contact the Department of Human Services on the Provider Enquiry Line – 13 21 50.

The data file for software vendors was released on 22 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.*