

Medicare Ineligible & HIV Medication

Options to access HIV medication without Medicare



People living with HIV who are not eligible for Medicare have the following options to access their supply of HIV antiretroviral medications in NSW.

1 PUBLIC HOSPITAL

People living with HIV can see an s100 prescriber in a public hospital and have their medication dispensed from the hospital pharmacy. The cost of consultations and any required pathology (monitoring of your viral load, CD4 count and other blood tests and sexual health tests) will be covered by the hospital.

2 NSW SEXUAL HEALTH CLINIC

People living with HIV can attend a publicly funded sexual health clinic and have their medication dispensed from a hospital pharmacy. The cost of consultations, and any required pathology (monitoring of your viral load, CD4 count and other blood tests and sexual health tests) will be covered by the sexual health clinic.

3 s100 GP PRACTICE

People living with HIV can continue to see their regular s100 prescriber but will need to have their medication dispensed from a hospital pharmacy. The cost of the consult, and any required pathology (monitoring of your viral load, CD4 count and other blood tests and sexual health tests) will need to be covered by the patient or practice.

Ineligible for Medicare?

People who are living with HIV, and who are not eligible for Medicare or who do not have a Medicare card can find it costly to access their HIV medication. These include:

- overseas visitors living with HIV (working, studying or holidaying in Australia) whose country does not have a Reciprocal Health Care Agreement with the Australian Government
- migrants (refugees and humanitarian entrants) to Australia who have applied for permanent residency, or
- migrants, asylum seekers to Australia who are ineligible for Medicare

Positive Life NSW offers information and safe, free and confidential support to people living with HIV in NSW, whether you are Medicare eligible or not.

Phone (02) 9206-2177 or 1800 245 677

4 IMPORT YOUR HIV MEDICATION FROM YOUR HOME COUNTRY

People living with HIV can have your HIV medication to be posted from your home country using the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) 'Personal Importation Scheme'. This involves a family member or friend or overseas supplier sending your HIV medication a maximum of three months at a time. You will need a letter as well as a prescription from the prescribing doctor in your home country. The letter will need to state the medication is for a medical condition. You might be asked to produce both the letter and prescription to pick up the parcel.

For more information visit www.tga.gov.au/personal-importation-scheme

5 IMPORT YOUR HIV MEDICATION FROM AN ONLINE CHEMIST

People living with HIV can import your HIV medication from an online chemist using the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) 'Personal Importation Scheme'. This option means you can purchase generic brands of HIV medication from an online chemist for your own personal use.

There are a number conditions you must comply with. The HIV medication are to be used only by you, and must not be given to any other person. You can import a maximum of three months supply with a valid Australian-issued prescription from an Australian s100 prescriber (specialist HIV doctor).

Online purchases must be approached with caution. Ensure the website is legitimate and offers safe, reliable medication within the use-by date manufactured to appropriate standards. The World Health Organisation (WHO) approves safe and reliable HIV medications. Purchasing WHO approved generic medication means you can expect high levels of efficacy.

Three reputable online websites include:

- www.alldaychemist.com
- www.inhousepharmacy.vu
- www.aids-drugs-online.com

6 RECIPROCAL HEALTH CARE AGREEMENTS

People living with HIV from 11 countries can access your medical care including HIV medication at the PBS subsidised rate during your time in Australia. Requirements will vary with each country.

For more information visit www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/when-reciprocal-health-care-agreements-apply-and-you-visit-australia

MORE INFORMATION

- Medicare Eligibility - www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/medicare-card
- Healthcare for visitors to Australia - www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/enablers/health-care-visitors-australia
- Find your nearest Medicare Office - <http://findus.humanservices.gov.au/>
- HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC) - www.halc.org.au
- HIV Positive Migration Guide - <http://halc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/positive-migration-guide.pdf>

The following options are available under extenuating circumstances and are not a guaranteed option.

7 CLINICAL TRIALS

People living with HIV who are ineligible for Medicare can access HIV medication by being part of a clinical trial. This will depend on the availability, the type of trial and your visa status. Doctors at the following clinics can help identify current availability and relevant clinical trials.

- St Vincent's Hospital Sydney - 8382 3707
- The Albion Centre - 9332 9600
- Taylor Square Private Clinic - 9331 6151
- Holdsworth House - 9331 7228
- Search the Australian Clinical Trials database www.australianclinicaltrials.gov.au



Questions or Support?

If you have any treatments or medications questions or need safe, free and confidential support, please call a Peer Support Officer on (02) 9206-2177, 1800 245 677 (freecall) or email contact@positivelife.org.au

For more information phone 02 9206 2177 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or visit www.positivelife.org.au