

# Public Hospital

Public Hospital cover enables you to be treated by the doctor of your choice, however, you are only covered for treatment in a public hospital, not a private hospital. It is a very comprehensive cover, which does not have any treatment exclusions or restrictions.

## What does Public Hospital cover you for?

Over the page, you'll find a comprehensive list of the types of treatments, services and products you can claim under your Public Hospital cover. You'll also see information on the things you are not covered for as well as the waiting periods that apply before you can make different types of claims.

## Your hospital cover pays benefits on four types of costs:

### 1. Public hospital of your choice

With Public Hospital, you're up to 100% covered for all of the hospital's costs when you are treated in any public hospital. This is for both overnight and same-day procedures. The only costs that won't be covered are personal services such as television hire, internet access, newspaper delivery etc.

Please note that some state governments allow public hospitals to charge fees outside the default rate covered by the health funds. These additional charges are not covered by your Public Hospital cover. You should check with the hospital prior to admission what your out-of-pocket expenses will be.

If you choose to be treated in a private hospital you will be left with substantial out-of-pocket hospital costs, which can often add up to many thousands of dollars.

### 2. Doctors of your choice

When you are treated as an inpatient in hospital, your doctors' fees are shared between Medicare, your hospital cover and yourself.

Medicare will reimburse you for 75% of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) fee and your Public Hospital cover pays the remaining 25%. Any amount your doctor chooses to charge above the MBS fee is an out-of-pocket cost you will be responsible for paying.

Your Public Hospital cover gives you access to a gap cover program that can help you to reduce or eliminate any out-of-pocket costs by making certain arrangements with your doctors before you go into hospital, this is called Access Gap cover. You can see which doctors currently participate in rt's Access Gap cover program in the members' area of our website.

### 3. Implanted prostheses and in-hospital pharmaceuticals

Most prostheses and pharmaceuticals you receive in relation to your treatment in hospital are fully covered, but there are a few restrictions on the types of products we can pay for. These generally apply to items that are not covered by the government's Prostheses List or Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). To limit any potential out-of-pocket costs, ask your doctor which prosthesis is best for you and if there is a no-gap option available.

### 4. Ambulance attendance and transportation

Depending on where you live, you're covered for emergency ambulance attendance and transportation. You'll find full details over the page.

## How do you make a hospital cover claim?

### Planned hospital stays

#### 1. Decide whether you wish to go private or public

Having private hospital cover gives you the best of all options when it comes to deciding by whom you want to be treated. You also have the option of choosing not to use your hospital cover and to instead be treated as a public patient. As a private patient, you have more control over the timing of your treatment and can nominate the doctor you wish to treat you, but you may have out-of-pocket costs following the procedure. As a public patient, you are less likely to have any out-of-pocket costs, but you often have no control over the timing of your treatment or the doctors who are appointed to care for you. With private hospital cover, you have the ability to make the choice that suits you best.

#### 2. Make sure that you have served your waiting periods

When you take out hospital cover for the first time, rejoin after letting your cover lapse, or when you upgrade to a higher level of cover, you are required to serve waiting periods. This means you must have the cover for a certain period of time before you can claim for some services. All the waiting periods that apply to your Public Hospital cover are shown over the page. If you're not sure whether or not you've served your waiting periods, please call our team to find out.

#### 3. Make sure that the treatment or procedure you're planning to claim is covered

If you're not 100% certain, please ask us. With Public Hospital cover, the simple test of whether something is covered or not is whether Medicare pays a benefit; if Medicare pays, so does Public Hospital. When you are booking your hospital stay, the hospital will ask you for the details of your cover and will contact us to confirm that you are covered for the procedure you're having. They'll also check that your membership is paid up to date.

#### 4. Ask your doctors if they will use our Access Gap cover

You need to make this arrangement before your hospital stay. If your doctors agree, it means they are willing to accept a set fee for their services that is higher than the MBS fee, but probably less than what they might otherwise charge. This means you are likely to have lower out-of-pocket costs, and in some cases, none at all. We recommend you contact our team for more information about how to request Access Gap cover arrangements when you are planning your hospital stay.

#### 5. Find out if you're suitable for our Hospital at Home program

Hospital at Home can help you to get home from hospital sooner, and sometimes avoid a hospitalisation altogether, by providing you with hospital-equivalent treatment and follow-up care in your own home. The program is available for all kinds of treatments and post-procedure support. If it is possible to provide the treatments you need in your home, and if you, your doctor and the hospital all agree that it is appropriate for you, then we can help. Ask our team for more information about Hospital at Home.

#### 6. Following your hospital stay

You usually won't see any bills from the hospital, they get sent directly to us, but you will receive bills from all the doctors who treat you.

If your doctors agreed to participate in our Access Gap cover, send your doctors' bills to us together with a completed claim form (available to download from our website, or ask our team to email or post one to you). With Access Gap cover your doctors will have either agreed to charge you no gap, or they will have given you a quote in advance for any out-of-pocket costs you might have. You are responsible for paying any agreed out-of-pocket costs.

If your doctors do not participate in our Access Gap cover, take your doctors' bills to a Medicare office. They will pay 75% of the MBS fee and give you a statement that you send to us together with a completed claim form (available to download from our website, or ask our team to email or post one to you). We will pay the remaining 25% of the MBS fee. Any remaining amount is an out-of-pocket cost you are responsible for paying.

#### Unplanned hospital stays

If you are taken to hospital as a result of an accident or emergency, you will more than likely go to a public hospital emergency ward. Most public hospital emergency departments will treat you as a public patient at no cost. Some private hospitals also have emergency departments, and if you attend one of these, you are not covered for the costs. Hospital cover only comes into play when you are admitted, as an inpatient to hospital.

If the hospital does decide that you need to be admitted, you will be asked if you have private hospital cover. Remember, you're not obligated to declare or to use your private cover if it doesn't suit you – you have the option of choosing to be treated as a public patient under Medicare rather than using your cover.

## PUBLIC HOSPITAL COVER

Here's what you're covered for:

Public hospital costs		
<b>Accommodation</b>	Up to 100% of the cost of shared room accommodation in a public hospital. If you elect to have a private room, you will have out-of-pocket costs.	
<b>Operating theatre / Intensive care / Coronary care</b>	Up to 100% of the cost in a public hospital only.	
Doctors' costs		
<b>Doctor of your choice</b>	<p>100% of the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) fee for services provided by doctors in hospital.</p> <p>When you are treated in hospital, Medicare will pay 75% of the MBS fee for each 'item' and hospital cover is only allowed by law to pay the remaining 25%. Doctors are not limited to only charging the MBS fee – and that's where people can end up with out-of-pocket costs, because the law prevents funds from paying more than 25% of the MBS fee.</p> <p>We offer a program as part of all our hospital covers that can help to reduce the likelihood of out-of-pocket costs. With Access Gap cover, you can ask your doctors to charge a set fee based on a different fee schedule, which is higher than the MBS fee but probably not as much as they might otherwise charge. If they agree to use Access Gap cover, you will either have no out-of-pocket costs or you will know in advance what the costs will be. We can give you more information and assistance with this when you are planning your hospital stay.</p> <p>Please note that doctors usually work in a select few hospitals, which may limit the choice of hospital available to you if you wish to be treated by a particular doctor.</p>	
Prostheses and pharmaceutical costs		
<b>Prostheses</b>	100% of the cost of government-approved no-gap prostheses (lower benefits apply for other prostheses). We recommend you contact our member care team to find out exactly what you're covered for before going into hospital.	
<b>Pharmaceuticals</b>	100% of the cost of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pharmacy items directly related to the reason for your hospitalisation, supplied to you during your admission</li> <li>pharmaceuticals listed on the Commonwealth Exceptional Drug List.</li> </ul>	
Ambulance attendance and transportation costs		
<b>Ambulance</b>	<p>Residents of VIC, SA, WA, TAS, NT – up to \$5,000 per person per year for emergency ambulance attendance or transportation in the case of accident or illness. Cover applies anywhere in Australia. Residents of Tasmania are covered by a reciprocal state government ambulance scheme in all states except QLD and SA, so our ambulance cover only applies where the state government scheme does not. You can also purchase additional ambulance cover through a state government ambulance service.</p> <p>Residents of NSW or the ACT – unlimited cover for emergency transportation, and medically necessary non-emergency transportation. The service must be provided by a state government operated, authorised or approved ambulance scheme. Cover applies anywhere in Australia. Please contact the fund prior to using any non-emergency patient transportation supplied by a hospital for inter-hospital transfers.</p> <p>Residents of QLD – unlimited cover under a QLD state government ambulance scheme. Cover applies anywhere in Australia.</p>	
Additional benefits available		
<b>Hospital at Home</b> (hospital substitution program)	Offers an alternative to a hospital admission or enables you to leave hospital early and receive treatment in your own home.	For more information, enrolment and referral forms, call our member care team on <b>1300 886 123</b> or visit <a href="http://rthealth.com.au">rthealth.com.au</a>
<b>Chronic disease prevention and management program</b>	Helps people self-manage existing or potential chronic diseases (including asthma, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease and others).	

Here's where out-of-pocket costs can come from:

<b>Admission to a private hospital</b>	If you receive treatment in a private hospital, we will pay a 'default benefit' toward your accommodation, but no other benefits for hospital costs are payable. You will have substantial out-of-pocket costs.	
<b>Treatments and procedures not covered by Medicare</b>	If the treatment or procedure you're having cannot be claimed under Medicare, your normal cover entitlements won't apply. You will have substantial out-of-pocket costs.	
<b>Hospital or medical costs for outpatient treatment</b>	Your Public Hospital cover can only pay benefits for treatment you receive as an inpatient, that is, when you are admitted as a patient to hospital.	
<b>Private hospital emergency department fees</b>	When you are treated in an emergency department, you are an outpatient (you have not yet been admitted to the hospital). No benefits are payable for outpatient treatment.	
<b>Discharge pharmaceuticals</b>	These are items prescribed for you to take home after you are discharged from hospital. No benefits are payable for these under your Public Hospital cover, but you may be able to claim under your extras cover.	
<b>Services such as television hire, internet access, purchase of newspapers, purchase of medication not related to the reason for your admission, hospital administration fees</b>	Your Public Hospital cover does not pay benefits for these additional products or services.	

Waiting periods:

<b>Accidents</b>	1 day	
<b>General services</b>	2 months	
<b>Psychiatry, rehabilitation and palliative care</b>	2 months	
<b>Pre-existing conditions</b>	12 months	A pre-existing condition is 'an ailment or illness, the signs or symptoms of which were in existence at any time during the six months preceding the day on which the member joined the fund or upgraded to a higher level of cover'. If you have a medical condition at the time you join rt, or upgrade your existing rt hospital cover, you may not be immediately covered. If a claim looks like it may relate to a pre-existing condition, a medical advisor or practitioner appointed by us will examine information provided by your doctor/s and any other material relevant to the claim, and will make a determination as to whether the condition is pre-existing or not.
<b>Obstetrics and other pregnancy-related services and treatments</b>	12 months	

Read more about your hospital cover in our online **A to Z guide in the forms and publications section** of our website [rthealth.com.au/publications](http://rthealth.com.au/publications).

If you have a hospital stay coming up, we strongly recommend you call us for advice about how to make the most of your hospital cover, and to confirm that you are covered for the procedure you're having.

Effective 1 April 2017. Fund rules and policies are subject to change without notice. If a change will adversely affect your membership and/or benefits, we will notify you in writing. Depending on the issue, this may be through a personally addressed letter, via email or through our member magazine, *be well*. While you are making your decision about whether to join rt health, and which cover is best for you, it is important that you read (and retain for future reference) this cover guide and any other materials that we might send to you or refer you to.

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**Our industry code of conduct** The Private Health Insurance Code of Conduct is a voluntary industry code aimed at delivering better service to health members through clear and complete communication, whether in writing or in person. As a signatory to the code, we are committed to ensuring that our members receive accurate information from properly trained staff, including clear and complete policy documentation, and information on internal and external dispute resolution processes. You can read more about the code at [www.privatehealthcareaustralia.org.au](http://www.privatehealthcareaustralia.org.au).

*We make it simpler*