

*Medibank GapCover -  
helping me manage  
my doctors' bills*



# Your guide to closing the gap

Going to hospital shouldn't leave you with large doctors' bills when you have private health cover. But it can – because of what's referred to as the 'gap'.

The good news is we're committed to helping you close the gap – with Medibank GapCover.

Put simply, Medibank GapCover is an arrangement we have with participating doctors to help you have more certainty and control over doctors' charges for treatment you receive in hospital.

GapCover has helped thousands of members to limit or even avoid out-of-pocket expenses. Inside you'll find more information on how it works and what you need to do.



# What's the gap?

When you're admitted to hospital or a day-hospital facility, you're entitled to benefits for the medical services provided by your doctor. This is based on the Federal Government's fee schedule, otherwise known as the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS). In short, Medicare pays 75% of this fee. We pay the remaining 25%.

In many cases, doctors charge above the fees set out in the MBS. This can leave you to pick up the shortfall, or what's often referred to as the 'gap' amount.

Have a look at the diagram below. This shows you the benefits you're entitled to from Medicare and from us. It also shows you the 'gap'.

Medibank Private GapCover can help you minimise or even avoid this out-of-pocket expense.

## ← Doctor's total charge for in-hospital medical services →

Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) fee. This fee is set by the Federal Government.		The gap is the amount your doctor may charge over and above the MBS fee, leaving you out-of-pocket.
Medicare pays 75% of the MBS fee for in-hospital medical services.	Medibank pays 25% of the MBS fee for in-hospital medical services.	

Note: Doctors can choose whether they participate in GapCover on a case-by-case or episode-by-episode basis.

# How exactly does GapCover work?

Under GapCover, the maximum amount you can be out-of-pocket – or the maximum gap – for treatment you have during a hospital admission is \$500 per doctor. In many cases, there's no gap at all.



In 2009, 89% of Medibank GapCover claims had no gap ie. no out-of-pocket expenses

[Based on 2009 calendar year data for Medibank Private GapCover in-hospital medical claims]

Where a doctor agrees to participate in GapCover, we pay a higher fee for the procedure. This means that the total amount the doctor receives from us and Medicare for your treatment is more than the MBS fee – we'll call this the 'GapCover Fee'. In return, the doctor agrees to limit or eliminate the gap they charge you.

This means, if your doctor agrees to participate in GapCover, there are two possible scenarios:

Your doctor charges the 'GapCover Fee' for the treatment you receive in hospital

=

no gap for you

OR

Your doctor charges above the 'GapCover Fee' for the treatment you receive in hospital

=

a limited gap amount for you of no more than \$500 per doctor

You can see that, by choosing a doctor who'll use GapCover, you can limit or even avoid a gap. Having no gap at all means no out-of-pocket expenses for in-hospital medical services. Having a limited gap means your in-hospital medical out-of-pocket expenses are capped.

There are a couple of things it's important to be aware of about GapCover. First, it's entirely up to your doctor whether they'll participate. Second, they can decide to participate on a case-by-case basis.

## *How do I find a doctor who'll participate in GapCover?*

Sometimes, you'll find it's a matter of doing a little bit of homework to find a doctor who'll participate in your case.

### **Talk to your GP**

Ask if they can refer you to a doctor who participates in GapCover. They can check on our website for a list of doctors who've participated in our GapCover scheme in the past.

If they refer you to a doctor who won't participate in your case, it's worth calling around and making enquiries to find one who will.

### **Talk to the doctor who'll be treating you in hospital**

Ask them directly if they'll participate in GapCover.

It's also important to ask them if other doctors will be involved in your in-hospital treatment (eg. an assistant surgeon or an anaesthetist). Ask for their contact details, so you can call them and find out if they'll participate in GapCover too.

## *Once my doctor agrees to participate, what do I do next?*

Your next step is to ask for a written estimate of the out-of-pocket costs (if any) you can expect from each of the doctors who'll be involved in your in-hospital treatment. This is an important step, as it's confirmation they'll participate in GapCover and what your out-of-pocket expenses will be.

## *What about the bills and claiming?*

Doctors participating in GapCover should bill us directly for the costs of the treatment or procedure, so you won't need to submit a claim to us for your medical costs at all. This means the only bill you receive from your doctor should be for the gap amount (if there is one). This shouldn't be more than \$500 per doctor. And there should be no additional fees charged such as booking fees.

If you receive a bill for the entire amount for the procedure, please call us on 132 331.



# Anything else I need to know?

Yes. There are a few more things you need to know.

- As a patient, the choice of doctor is yours, and you're entitled to ask if your doctor will participate in GapCover.
- To access GapCover, you need to be on an eligible cover (Visitors Covers, Working Visitors Covers, Overseas Student Health Cover and Basic Public Hospital Cover are not eligible). Also, the service being provided must be included on your cover and attract a Medicare benefit.
- GapCover can only be used to limit or eliminate out-of-pockets for in-patient medical procedures your doctor performs in a hospital or day-hospital facility.
- GapCover doesn't apply to services such as blood tests or x-rays provided by pathologists and radiologists.
- If you're admitted to hospital as a result of an emergency, talk to your doctors as soon as you can about your out-of-pocket expenses and whether they will participate in GapCover.
- If you're referred to another doctor while you're in hospital, you'll need to ask if they'll participate in GapCover.
- GapCover doesn't eliminate amounts that you've agreed to pay under your cover such as your excess and daily co-payment.



The best way to limit your out-of-pocket costs is to firstly be aware of them. Rule of thumb when going to hospital? Call us first on 132 331. This way, we can help you get your head around what's involved and the questions you should ask your doctor.



**Phone**

132 331

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