



Putting your kids first

Education & Health Services for Families

MEDICARE INFORMATION

Children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Medicare Benefit Schemes: The Chronic Disease Management Plan, the Better Access to Mental Health Plan and the Helping Children with Autism Access to Diagnosis and Treatment.

Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Plan

Previously the Enhanced Primary Care (EPC) plan

- **Five sessions with an Allied Health Professional** (see below for a list of which professionals are considered Allied Health Professionals) per calendar year.
- **\$4250 worth of dental treatment** if the doctor writing the referral feels that the chronic condition (ASD) is causing the dental problems. Problems such as teeth grinding, eating non-edible items, refusing to brush teeth etc. could be attributed to the child's Autism Spectrum Disorder. The total payment is available across two consecutive years, and only covers treatment delivered in a dental chair (i.e. it does not cover procedures given under general anaesthetic). Please make sure your dentist can accept this referral because not all dentists do.

People with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are eligible for the CDM because an ASD is a Chronic Condition.

The CDM can be written by your GP and people with ASDs are eligible for five sessions every calendar year. Once the initial plan has been made, your GP will not need to write new plans each year, but your GP may review the plan.



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Allied Health Professionals.

- Psychologists
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech Pathologists
- Social Workers
- Dieticians
- Asthma Educators
- Audiologists
- Orthotists or Prosthetics

- Dental Therapists
- Pharmacists
- Dentists
- Podiatrists
- Physiotherapists
- Diabetes Educators
- Exercise Physiologists
- Aboriginal Health Workers
- Optometrists

For more information – go to

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-medicare-health_pro-gp-pdf-allied-cnt.htm



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Better Access to Mental Health *(Also known as Mental Health Care Plan)*

- **12 sessions of individual therapy with a Psychologist, or Occupational Therapist or Social Worker who has been specifically trained in the psychological effects and treatment of Autism.** An additional six sessions may be available in exceptional circumstances
- **12 Group Sessions of Therapy with a Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, or Social Worker.**

The Better Access to Mental Health Care plan is an option available for anybody (individuals with an ASD, parents, siblings, carers etc.) who feels that their overall wellbeing and mental health is affected. Mental Illness is common; around one in five Australians will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives. Your mental health can be affected by a number of things; physical problems such as chemical imbalances in the brain and infections, as well as non physical problems such as exposure to trauma, family environments, cumulative stress and difficult life events. We know that having a child with an ASD can be hard. Any member of the family who is feeling sad, confused, depressed or anxious about the person in the family who has an autism spectrum disorder should see their GP to discuss other professionals who may be able to support them, such as social workers or counsellors.

People who have autism spectrum disorders can also have mental health difficulties. They may be anxious about the environments around them; they may be depressed because they are having difficulty forming relationships with other people. There are many reasons why they would be eligible to access the Better Access to Mental Health Care Plan, and they should be encouraged to seek support from the appropriate professionals.

Group sessions can be used for social skills groups, play therapy groups, anxiety groups; any group that is run by the above listed professionals and is working towards building the confidence, self esteem and ability of the person with an autism spectrum disorder.

People are eligible for 12 sessions under the Better Access to Mental Health plan every calendar year. You can get a referral from your GP. Make sure you book a long consultation with your doctor to allow you and your doctor enough time to prepare a GP Mental Health Care Plan and discuss your treatment options. A Psychiatrist or Paediatrician can also write this referral. After the initial plan has been written, you do not need a new plan each year, but the doctor may review the plan. The doctor may also refer you for six sessions initially then review the plan.

For more information, visit: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-pubs-b-better



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Helping Children with Autism Access to Diagnosis and Treatment

- **Four Appointments for Private Diagnosis referred by a Paediatrician or Child Psychiatrist to a Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist.** This is called the *'Helping Children with Autism Increased Access To Diagnosis'*
- **20 Sessions of Speech, Occupational Therapy or Psychology.** This is called the *'Helping Children With Autism Treatment Plan'*

Families have the option of using the Medicare rebate system to help pay for private assessments. The family's paediatrician or child psychiatrist can diagnose the child with autism, in collaboration with a private speech therapist, an occupational therapist and a psychologist. The rebate allows a total of four sessions with these professionals (together not each).

With a diagnosis of a Pervasive Developmental Disorder, the child will be eligible for **20 sessions** shared between a speech therapist, an occupational therapist or a psychologist. Your paediatrician or psychiatrist will develop a treatment plan for your child with you. These rebates can only be used once in the child's life time, must be written by their 13th birthday, and used by their 15th birthday.

For more information, visit:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-autism-factpar



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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I use all these at the same time?

A. Yes!

Q. Can I use the 20 Sessions more than once?

A. Your child will receive this plan only once in his/her life time.

Q. Who can write the referrals?

A. The Helping Children with Autism referrals need to be written by a paediatrician or psychiatrist. The Better Access to Mental Health referral can also be written by a paediatrician or psychiatrist, but are more commonly written by a GP. The Chronic Disease Management referrals can only be written by your GP.

Q. Are these sessions free of cost?

A. No – you will receive a rebate from Medicare – this rebate does not cover the total cost of the service. Please check with Medicare the amount you will receive.

Q. Can the Allied Health Professional that is seeing my child for the 20 sessions also be my professional of choice for the HCWA initiative?

A. If the therapist is on the FaHCSIA approved panel you may use this therapist. If the therapist is not on the approved panel you will need to source a service provider that is approved by FaHCSIA.



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	Chronic Disease Management Plan	Better Access to Mental Health Plan	Helping Children with Autism Treatment Plan
Total Number of Sessions	5 + Dental	12 Ind. <i>(additional 6 individual in exceptional circumstances)</i> + 12 Group	20
When Must I Use It By?	Each Calendar Year	Each Calendar Year	Childs 15 th birthday <i>(plan must be written by their 13th birthday)</i>
Speech Therapy	✓	✗	✓
Psychology	✓	✓	✓
Occupational Therapy	✓	✓*	✓
Social Worker	✓	✓	✗
Group Sessions	✗	✓	✗
GPs write the referral	✓	✓	✗
Paediatricians write referral	✗	✓	✓
Psychiatrists write referral	✗	✓	✓
Adults eligible	✓	✓	✗

- Specific post graduate training in the psychological effects and treatment of ASD required for Occupational Therapists to be eligible to treat patients with ASD



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