



Mental Health Treatment Plans

What is a Mental Health Treatment Plan?

A Mental Health Treatment Plan (MHTP, previously known as a ‘mental health care plan’) is a plan for people with a mental health disorder. If you have mental health issues, your doctor can write a plan for you.

The plan identifies what type of health care you need and spells out what you and your doctor have agreed you are aiming to achieve.

Who is eligible for a Mental Health Treatment Plan?

A MHTP is available to you if you have a mental health disorder diagnosed by a doctor (see page 3 for the full list of disorders covered by a MHTP) . You will need to be eligible for Medicare to access a MHTP.

How do I get a Mental Health Treatment Plan?

Schedule an appointment with your doctor who will assess whether you have a mental health disorder and are eligible for a Mental Health Treatment Plan.

Your doctor will ask a few questions, complete the plan, and you will set goals together. They may also ask you to complete some brief questionnaires that help to assess your mental health concerns. Before you go to your appointment with your doctor, it’s a good idea to write down a list of the things you want support with. When you make the booking with your doctor, ask if a long appointment — 20 minutes or more — is needed.

In some situations, your doctor might refer you to a psychiatrist (a doctor who specialises in mental health) or a paediatrician (who specialises in young people) for a clearer diagnosis.

What does a Mental Health Treatment Plan cover?

If you have a Mental Health Treatment Plan, you will be entitled to Medicare rebates for up to 10 individual psychological appointments per calendar year. If eligible, you may also be able to access up to 10 group allied mental health services each year.

You can't get Medicare rebates for all the sessions in one go. Your doctor will initially approve up to six rebated sessions (they can specify any number depending on need). Following your first session with your mental health professional, they will typically write to your doctor to tell them that you have engaged in treatment. After you have completed the specific number of sessions approved in the initial plan (usually six), your mental health provider will write a progress letter to your doctor. You will then need to see your doctor again for a mental health plan review so they can decide if you need a referral for further sessions. **Please note that you may need to leave a few days after your sixth session for your GP to receive and read this letter from your mental health provider.**

Your doctor can then refer you for up to another six sessions. However, only ten sessions can be used in any calendar year. Therefore, if following the initial six sessions, your doctor re-referred you for another six sessions, you would need to wait until the following calendar year to use the final two sessions to claim the rebate.

A MHTP does not expire. A referral is valid until the referred number of sessions have been completed, regardless of whether a patient chooses to change their mental health provider.

Temporary COVID-19 extensions for MHTP

From 9 October 2020 until 30 June 2022, 10 additional individual psychological therapy rebates (previously available only to people whose movement was restricted by a state or territory public health order), are now available each calendar year to all eligible patients under the existing MHTP initiative. This means that currently you may be eligible for up to **twenty rebated sessions** in total. To be eligible, a person must have:

- an approved MHTP plan developed by their medical practitioner (GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician);
- used their initial 10 individual MHTP sessions before they seek a referral for additional sessions; and
- a referral from their reviewing mental health practitioner.

Put simply, once you have had ten sessions with your mental health practitioner, they will write a letter to your doctor outlining your progress. Your doctor will then decide if a further ten rebated sessions is appropriate for you. **Again, you may need to leave a few days after your tenth session with your mental health practitioner for the letter they write to be received and read by your doctor.**

How much will I have to pay to see a mental health provider?

Health professionals each set their own fee, and a Medicare rebate is available using a MHTP to reduce your overall out of pocket costs. It is a good idea to find out the cost of a service and the available Medicare benefit from the health professional before making an appointment.

Psychological issues covered by a MHTP

- Alcohol Use Disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- Drug Use Disorder
- Eating disorders
- OCD
- Panic Disorder
- Psychotic disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Sexual disorders
- Sleep problems
- Phobic disorder
- Co-occurring anxiety and depression
- Attention-Deficit Disorder
- Bereavement
- Bipolar disorders
- Adjustment Disorder
- Conduct Disorder