



Active Ingredient Prescribing – Medical Director

What is Active Ingredient Prescribing?

The Department of Health has changed legislation so that Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and Repatriation PBS (RPBS) medicines must be prescribed using the active ingredient names, instead of the brand name of a medicine. Active Ingredient Prescribing will become mandatory from 1 February 2021.

Why is this change happening?

The goal of this initiative is to help people understand what medicines they are taking and to reduce the risk of people accidentally taking multiple doses of the same medicine under different names. Other benefits include allowing pharmacists to easily dispense an alternative generic medicine if the patient's usual brand is unavailable and a potential reduction in out-of-pocket costs to patients and the PBS via increased uptake of generic medicines.

Are there any exceptions?

Yes, exceptions to Active Ingredient Prescribing include:

- Handwritten prescriptions.
- Paper-based medication charts in residential aged care settings.
- Medicines with four or more active ingredients.
- Non-medicinal items which don't have active ingredients (e.g., dressings, nutritional products).

Will this change my prescribing workflow?

The prescribing workflow in MedicalDirector software will remain unchanged unless prescribers want to ensure that brand names continue to be displayed on prescriptions.

Practitioners will need to identify situations where it is necessary for the medical treatment of the patient to identify a brand of the medication and ensure this is specified on their prescription. MedicalDirector Clinical and Helix will have a new checkbox to include the brand-name on the prescription; the law prohibits software from pre-ticking this box. There is no change to the '*Brand substitution not permitted*' checkbox. If this is left unticked, existing brand substitution arrangements still apply.

MedicalDirector is updating software to reflect the updated legislation. These software upgrades are critically important, as from 1 February 2021 a prescription that does not comply with Active Ingredient Prescribing legislation will not be valid for PBS/RPBS subsidy.

Helix users will receive the update automatically.

MedicalDirector Clinical users must upgrade if they want to prescribe under the PBS/RPBS.

Practices are advised to contact their IT Provider to ensure their software and all GP workstations are upgraded by 1st February 2021

References:

RACGP: www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/technology/clinical-technology/active-ingredient-prescribing
Medical Director: www.medicaldirector.com/news/clinical-practice/2020/08/active-ingredient-prescribing-is-coming-heres-what-you-need-to-know