A Guide to Medicare Benefits Schedule Items 12325 and 12326

Retinal Photography with a Non-Mydriatic Retinal Camera

Background

- On 1 November 2016, the Australian Government introduced two Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) items – 12325 and 12326 – allowing medical practitioners providing primary glycaemic management of the patient to claim a rebate for obtaining and analysing retinal photographs and assessing distance vision for the detection of diabetic retinopathy in patients diagnosed with diabetes.

- This item is intended for the provision of retinal photography with a non-mydriatic (no pupil dilation) retinal camera.

- Any element of this service may be delegated to appropriately trained or qualified personnel (such as a registered nurses, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander health practitioners or workers, or diabetes educators) under the direction of the medical practitioner co-ordinating the patient’s care, who retains overall responsibility for claiming of the service.

Retinal photograph assessment

When reviewing the retinal photographs, the practitioner should assess the:

1. Quality of the photo:
   - if a clear image cannot be obtained due to small pupils, mydriatic drops are permitted if the health service has an approved protocol.
   - if a clear image cannot be obtained for any other reason, the patient should be referred to an optometrist for further assessment.

2. Presence of diabetic retinopathy:
   - if diabetic retinopathy is not detected, best practice recommends the patient should be referred to an optometrist for a comprehensive eye examination with pupil dilation.
   - if diabetic retinopathy is detected, the patient should be referred to an optometrist or ophthalmologist for further investigation in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines.

NOTES

- Anyone can have a photograph taken irrespective of billing eligibility (e.g. for patient education).

- Consider linking with other billing options:
  - 715 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Health Assessment (plus 10987 if applicable)
  - 721 – Preparation of a GP Management Plan (GPMP) (plus 10997 if applicable)

Information adapted from the Medicare website – www.mbsonline.gov.au

The following table outlines the required criteria for MBS items 12325 and 12326:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12325 (Indigenous)</th>
<th>12326 (non-Indigenous)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) the patient is of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent</td>
<td>a) the patient is not of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) the assessment is performed by the medical practitioner (other than an optometrist or ophthalmologist) providing the primary glycaemic management of the patient’s diabetes</td>
<td>The medical practitioner remains responsible for the overall process and claiming the MBS item, but may delegate any aspect of the assessment to appropriately trained or qualified personnel</td>
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<td>b) this item and 12326 have not applied to the patient in the preceding 12 months</td>
<td>c) this item and 12325 have not applied to the patient in the preceding 24 months</td>
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<td>c) the patient does not have any of the following, at the time of presentation:</td>
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<td>i. an <strong>existing</strong> diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy; or</td>
<td>No current diagnosis of diabetic retinopathy on the patient’s medical records (including on their optometry or ophthalmology records, or letters imported into the medical records)</td>
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<td>ii. visual acuity of <strong>less than 6/12</strong> in either eye; or</td>
<td>Patient’s presenting distance visual acuity (VA)* must be <strong>6/12 or better</strong> in both eyes</td>
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<td>iii. a difference of <strong>more than 2 lines of vision</strong> between the 2 eyes</td>
<td>Patient’s presenting distance VA in each eye should not be different by more than 2 lines on the VA chart (e.g. if one eye sees 6/6, then the other eye needs to be 6/9 or better) *If the patient normally wears glasses or contact lenses for distance vision (e.g. TV, driving) they should leave these on for VA assessment</td>
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