

## How much will it cost?

**Public hospital diabetes clinics are free** and generally are able to refer you to other services (such as blood tests) which are also free. Different hospitals have different services, but generally via public hospital clinics you can have free appointments with diabetes specialists/ endocrinologists and diabetes nurse educators. Many also have dietitians available.

**Private endocrinologists charge varying fees but you get most of it back on Medicare.** Medicare will refund \$60 back on your first appointment, and \$30 back for all appointments after that. The amount you get back through Medicare is not affected by what the doctor chooses to charge. The Medicare refund is calculated from what is called the Medicare Schedule Fee. Medicare sets what is effectively a 'minimum' charge for doctors and then refunds to you 85% of that amount. As at August 2004 the Schedule Fee for a specialist appointment in a hospital or private rooms is \$71 for the first appointment, and \$65 for all other appointments.

Don't be afraid to ask when you make your appointment what the fee will be.

**Getting your Medicare refund.** It takes a few weeks and can be deposited straight into your bank account or sent by cheque. If you have time you can also take your receipt into a Medicare office and get your refund in cash.

Visit [www.medicare.gov.au](http://www.medicare.gov.au) to find your nearest Medicare office - some are now starting to open on Saturdays.

**Ask your doctor's receptionist for a Medicare form.** Fill it out straight away, and even ask the receptionist to post it for you. That way you'll get your refund ASAP.

**Diabetes Educators can be seen for free at most major public hospitals.** Phone your nearest hospital during business hours and ask them to page the Diabetes Educator on call.

**Insulin will cost \$29.50 or \$4.70 if you have an approved concession or health care card.** One prescription is approximately three months' supply. You will get 5 x 10mL vials of insulin (for use with a syringe or insulin pump), or 5 boxes of 5 x 3mL penfils (for use in an insulin pen). Your prescription will also include 2 'repeats' which means you can go back to the chemist and get more insulin twice without having to see your doctor for another prescription.

**Blood Testing Strips cost \$6.35 per pack of 50 or \$1 with a concession or health care card.** Strips are subsidised by the federal government under the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) and cost \$6.35 per pack of 50 strips, or \$1 per pack with an approved concession or health care card.

**Syringes and insulin pen needles are free.** Also via the NDSS system as above.

**Blood glucose monitors** range in cost but are generally \$50-\$150. You will need to use this device constantly and carry it with you everywhere so it may be worth a little investment to get one that works for you. Many private health insurance funds rebate the cost of a new meter every two years.

**Insulin Pens** can generally be obtained for free from your diabetes educator.

**Get a Health Care Card if you're eligible!** Your eligibility doesn't change because you have diabetes but if you are 16 or over and earn less than \$18,512 per year (single, no kids) yourself (parents' income doesn't matter) you will be eligible. You will get discounts on insulin and other supplies.

Contact [Centrelink](http://www.realitycheck.org.au) for more information.