

Know Your Options: Supporting your children to access essential asthma medicines



The rules around access to Axotide Junior and Flixotide Junior metered dose inhaler (MDI) changed on 1 April 2023. They will change again soon, but if you have a child who uses this medicine, you may be affected. We are here to help.

What are the changes?

Axotide Junior and Flixotide Junior inhalers are medicines used to treat asthma and prevent asthma symptoms. They are recommended for young children. These medicines treat inflammation (swelling and redness) that cause asthma symptoms. They are good at preventing symptoms and the dangerous asthma attacks that can occur.

The Government makes these medicines cheaper for us through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Unfortunately, the rules that determine whether these medicines are available under the PBS changed on 1st April. **They will be changed back**, we hope by July, but we want to help in case you need it between now and then.

Until (about) July 2023, for new prescriptions of Axotide Junior or Flixotide Junior*:

For children under 6 years: Can only be accessed with a PBS subsidy if prescribed at least once by a kids or lung specialist doctor.

For children 6 years and over: Temporarily unavailable under the PBS.

* However, the repeats on your current prescription dated before 1st April 2023 can still be used.

* You can still buy this medicine 'privately' at the pharmacy if you don't rely on a reduced price under the PBS.

What are my options?

If you don't rely on concession card or Closing the Gap prices for your medicines, this change may be small. You can still access the medicine and will pay close to the same price.

For concession card holders and those registered in the Closing the Gap scheme

If you need Axotide Junior or Flixotide Junior for your child who is under 6 years, your access will be interrupted. You will need to either:

- See a lung or kids' specialist, which your doctor can arrange. We know this might not be possible or quick.
- Buy the medicine 'privately'. This means not subsidised by the PBS. This might be your best option, knowing that price relief is just around the corner. It might cost between \$11 and \$28 for a month's supply, depending on your pharmacy. If one pharmacy price will be difficult for you, you are allowed to shop around.
- Discuss whether there are other medicines your child can use with your doctor. You need an inhaled medicine that treats your child's airway inflammation. Your doctor may be able to recommend temporary alternatives.

If you need Axotide Junior or Flixotide Junior for your child who is 6 years or older, you may be offered other medicines that work much the same as Axotide Junior and Flixotide Junior. There are three other medicines that are available with the PBS subsidy that may be right for your child.

This sounds complicated, what do I absolutely need to know?

- 1 Continue to treat your child's asthma with their preventer medicine. It is there to help prevent their asthma symptoms when used regularly as prescribed.
- 2 You may be faced with higher medicine costs, especially if your child is under 6 years, but this won't be for too much longer.
- 3 From about July 2023, the PBS subsidy will be available again for children under 6. If 6 years and older, certain restrictions will apply. We'll update you again then.

How long will this change be in place?

The Government has reviewed the recently changed policy and have decided to modify these restrictions. We look forward to this being fixed and in place by July 2023.

If you have any questions, please call 1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462) and speak with one of our friendly Asthma Educators.



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asthma.org.au

