

9. Chronic Disease Initiatives

9.2 Asthma

The Practice Incentives Program (PIP) Asthma Incentive is for patients with moderate to severe asthma who in the opinion of the doctor could benefit from review, e.g. those whose asthma management could be improved. The role of the practice nurse is to support the GP to better manage the clinical care of patients.

GPs may choose to enrol their patient in the Asthma Cycle of Care, which at a minimum must include:

- at least two asthma related consultations within 12 months for a patient with moderate to severe asthma (at least one of which (the review consultation) is a consultation that was planned at a previous consultation)
- documented diagnosis and assessment of the level of asthma control and severity of asthma
- review of the patient's use of and access to asthma-related medication and devices
- providing the patient with a written asthma action plan (if the patient is unable to use a written asthma action plan, discussion with the patient about an alternative method of providing an asthma action plan)
- documentation of the discussion in the patient's medical records
- provision of asthma self-management education to the patient
- review of the written or documented asthma action plan.

Assessment of Severity

Generally, patients who meet the following criteria can be assumed to have been assessed as having moderate to severe asthma:

- Symptoms on most days, OR
- Use of preventer medication, OR
- Bronchodilator use at least 3 times per week, OR
- Hospital attendance or admission following an acute exacerbation of asthma.

The practice nurse role may include:

- establish, validate and maintain an asthma practice register where one exists
- maintain a recall register
- investigate and maintain supplies of resources and patient literature
- assist GP in providing the care requirements of the Asthma Cycle of care plan
- spirometry
- asthma education (e.g. types of medication, correct use of inhalers)
- ensure correct MBS item numbers are claimed.

The minimum requirements of the Asthma Cycle of Care may be carried out in two (2) visits or if necessary, as many visits as clinically required. For more detailed information regarding asthma diagnosis, assessment and best practice management refer to the National Asthma Council's website at **www.nationalasthma.org.au**.

Completion of the Asthma Cycle of Care does not preclude referral to a specialist, but a specialist consultation cannot be counted as one of the two visits.

A PIP Asthma SIP is available for completing the minimum requirements of the Asthma Cycle of Care for individual patients as specified above. The SIP will be paid to the medical practitioner who provided the service if the service was provided in a general practice participating in the PIP Asthma Incentive. More detailed information on the PIP Asthma Incentive is available from the Medicare Australia PIP enquiry line on 1800 222 032 or **www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/pip**.