



# Alternative positron emission tomography (PET) item for use during gallium-67 supply disruptions – factsheet

Last updated: 20 July 2022

- From **1 August 2022**, a new PET item will be available on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) for use during gallium-67 (Ga-67) supply disruptions.
- Item 61527 can be used when items 61429, 61430, 61442, 61450 or 61453 are unavailable due to Ga-67 supply disruptions and the patient's clinical condition requires the service to be performed before the resumption of normal isotope supply.
- The new item will ensure continuity of patient care by enabling providers to provide alternative PET imaging when the preferred gallium-67 based scan is unavailable due to a supply disruption.

## What are the changes?

When a scan using Ga-67 is unavailable due to a supply disruption, a PET item will be available as an alternative diagnostic service commencing from **1 August 2022**.

Item 61527 is for a whole body study using FDG PET, to be used when items 61429, 61430, 61442, 61450 or 61453 are unavailable due to a Ga-67 supply disruption.

**Attachment A** contains additional information.

## Why are the changes being made?

The new item will support the use of alternative services when the preferred service using Ga-67 is unavailable due to supply disruptions.

The Department of Health and Aged Care is aware that the supply of Ga-67 is currently unstable, with sporadic and unpredictable supply disruptions. The new item will ensure continuity of patient care and allow providers to provide alternative PET imaging when the preferred Ga-67 based scan is unavailable due to a supply disruption.

## What does this mean for requestors?

Specialists and consultant physicians can request item 61527 in circumstances where it is clinically necessary, and the request meets the item requirements. During the shortage, if a provider is unable to perform the service described in items 61429, 61430, 61442, 61450 or 61453 due to a supply disruption of Ga-67, the provider can instead provide item 61527.

## What does this mean for providers?

The alternative item must be provided by a credentialed nuclear medicine imaging specialist. When it is not possible to provide a requested item that uses Ga-67 due to supply shortages, a provider can instead deliver the alternative item.

Providers will be expected to use items 61429, 61430, 61442, 61450 or 61453 when the Ga-67 is available.

## How will these changes affect patients?

The alternative item will ensure that patients will have access to timely and appropriate care during supply disruptions of Ga-67. This will reduce health risks to patients who would otherwise have delayed access to services.

## Where can I find more information?

The MBS Online website at [www.mbsonline.gov.au](http://www.mbsonline.gov.au) will contain the full item descriptor and information on other changes to the MBS. In addition, you can also subscribe to future MBS updates by visiting [MBS Online](#) and clicking 'Subscribe'.

The Department offers an email advice service for providers seeking advice on interpretation of the MBS items and rules and the *Health Insurance Act 1973* and associated regulations. If you have a question regarding the interpretation of the Schedule, please send an email to [askMBS@health.gov.au](mailto:askMBS@health.gov.au).

By subscribing to '[News for Health Professionals](#)' on the Services Australia website you will receive regular news summaries.

If you need additional assistance with Medicare billing, claiming, payments, or obtaining a provider number, please visit the Health Professionals page on the Services Australia website at [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au) or contact the Services Australia on the Provider Enquiry Line – 13 21 50.

When available, the data file for software vendors is accessible via the MBS Online [Downloads](#) page.

*Please note that the information provided is a general guide only. It is ultimately the responsibility of treating practitioners to use their professional judgment to determine the most clinically appropriate services to provide, and then to ensure that any services billed to Medicare fully meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the legislation.*

*This sheet is current as of the Last updated date shown above, and does not account for MBS changes since that date.*

## Attachment A: item descriptor details

### New item 61527 – Whole body study using PET

**Overview:** Item 61527 is available as an alternative for items 61429, 61430, 61442, 61450 and 61453, when these items cannot be used due to Ga-67 supply disruptions. Item 61527 should only be used where the patient's clinical condition requires the service to be performed before the resumption of normal Ga-67 supply.

**Descriptor:** Whole body study using FDG PET, if the service is performed because the services to which items 61429, 61430, 61442, 61450 or 61453 apply cannot be performed due to the unavailability of gallium-67 (R).

**Restrictions/requirements not listed in the item descriptor:** Item 61527 can be used following a valid request for a service to which items 61429, 61430, 61442, 61450 or 61453 would apply and if:

1. the requested service is not available due to a supply disruption of gallium-67; and
2. the patient's clinical condition requires the service to be performed before the resumption of normal isotope supply is anticipated by the practitioner who provides the service; and
3. the report of the service performed includes a justification for the substitute service and the unavailability of the original item.

**MBS fee:** \$752.35

**Benefit:** 75% = \$564.25      85% = \$664.45      95% Out-of-hospital bulk billed benefit = \$714.75