

# Online PBS Authorities system – Severe Crohn’s disease Information Session – Questions & Answers

Question	Answer
<p>For medications such as ustekinumab, which has an IV load and SC maintenance dose, how do you request the application? Only one item code can be entered in the Online PBS Authorities (OPA) system when requesting the authority, however the IV and SC have separate item codes.</p>	<p>In this scenario, you will need to request two PBS authorities – one for the IV load and one for the SC maintenance dose. In most cases where there is a loading dose plus a maintenance dose, the eligibility questions for the maintenance authority request will be simpler as most of the eligibility questions are associated with the loading dose restriction.</p>
<p>You mentioned over 50% of authorities are requested via self-service using OPA. Is this over 50% of authorities for severe Crohn's disease?</p>	<p>No, the percentage is for all PBS authorities requested via self-service.</p> <p>Uptake of self-service for severe Crohn’s disease and fistulising Crohn’s disease has increased steadily from 13% in December 2025 to over 24% in February 2026.</p>
<p>If there is a shortage of a particular brand of a product in Australia, is there a way of not needing to do an extra authority application, e.g. if a biosimilar brand is not available and the patient needs to access the originator brand?</p>	<p>In the event of a serious shortage, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) may publish a Serious Scarcity Substitution Instrument (SSSI) which allows community pharmacists to substitute specific medicines without prior approval from the prescriber, as long as the permitted circumstances within the SSSI are met. If a biosimilar brand is experiencing a serious shortage, the TGA may elect to publish a SSSI allowing the originator brand to be dispensed. More information about SSSIs can be found on the PBS website (<a href="http://www.pbs.gov.au">www.pbs.gov.au</a>).</p>
<p>Is there a way to look up item codes on OPA without using the cheat sheet or the PBS website?</p>	<p>Yes, it is possible to perform a key word search in OPA for any PBS listed medicine, however for medicines that are listed for numerous indications, you may find it difficult to identify the intended item code.</p> <p>PBS authority applications can also be requested using integrated clinical prescribing software. Integrated software identifies the PBS item code for the authority request when you search for the item to be prescribed. Speak with your software vendor about integrated clinical prescribing software.</p>
<p>Can we search by disease group rather than drug name?</p>	<p>Due to limitations of the OPA user interface, it isn’t currently possible to search by disease group. We suggest speaking with your software vendor about the integrating PBS authorities within clinical prescribing software.</p>
<p>Can you remind us of where the item code cheat sheet is located?</p>	<p>The item code cheat sheet was sent out to peak bodies on 1 December 2025 with the communication about the Crohn’s Disease program being available for digital self-service. We have also included it with the resources sent out with the presentation package.</p>

	<p>Note: The information is subject to change with monthly new and amended listings recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. It will be up to you to maintain your cheat sheets. Alternatively, you can find the item code under Code &amp; Prescriber column next to the PBS medication on <a href="http://pbs.gov.au">pbs.gov.au</a></p>
<p>Where can I find the standalone CDAI calculation sheet to upload with my application in OPA?</p>	<p>Search for PB393 (Adult Crohn’s Disease Activity Index form) on <a href="http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au">www.servicesaustralia.gov.au</a></p>
<p>Can Services Australia assist me with patient baseline information for a new patient?</p>	<p>The transfer of a patient’s personal information, including baseline values and previous failures, must be arranged by health professionals and the patient.</p>
<p>My patient doesn’t quite meet the requirements of the PBS restriction; can an exemption be granted?</p>	<p>Under the PBS, medicines are made available based on recommendations from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC). Patients must meet the set criteria to be eligible for PBS subsidised medicines. Services Australia are unable to provide approval for an Authority Required medication where a patient does not meet the criteria established by PBAC.</p> <p>If you have concerns or questions about the eligibility criteria set by PBAC, you can contact the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing by email at <a href="mailto:pbs@health.gov.au">pbs@health.gov.au</a>.</p>
<p>Who can I contact for support or further information?</p>	<p>For technical support with:</p> <p><b>PRODA</b> (authentication) – contact the eBusiness team  Phone: 1800 700 199 Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm local time.  Email: <a href="mailto:ebusiness@servicesaustralia.gov.au">ebusiness@servicesaustralia.gov.au</a></p> <p><b>HPOS</b> – (access online government services) contact Medicare provider enquiries  Phone: 132 150 option 2</p> <p><b>For policy or legislation queries</b> – contact DHDA  Phone: 1800 020 613  Email: <a href="mailto:pbs@health.gov.au">pbs@health.gov.au</a></p> <p><b>For authority applications queries</b> – to query the status of an application and/or discuss an assessment result, contact Complex Drugs  Phone: 1800 700 270</p> <p><b>For OPA issues</b> – to report specific OPA system issues or for queries about this presentation, contact our team  Email: <a href="mailto:authorities.comms.change@servicesaustralia.gov.au">authorities.comms.change@servicesaustralia.gov.au</a></p> <p><b>For more information about the Online PBS Authorities system</b> – visit <a href="http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/hppbsauthorities">www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/hppbsauthorities</a></p> <p>Services Australia has a broad range of educational resources on the <b>Health Professional Education Resources</b> website. This includes simulations, podcast and an infographic on the Online PBS Authorities system. Visit <a href="https://hpe.servicesaustralia.gov.au/pharmaceutical-benefits-scheme.html">https://hpe.servicesaustralia.gov.au/pharmaceutical-benefits-scheme.html</a></p>