

CARDIAC IMAGING SERVICES AUGUST 2020 ITEM NUMBER CHANGES IN A NUTSHELL



on 1 August 2020, major changes to billing of Cardiac Imaging Services came into effect. These changes will impact all practitioners due to a change to ECG Item Numbers as well as impacting a broad range of Cardiologists and Specialists due to changes in AECG, Echo, Stress Echo and other item numbers .

Medical Billing Experts has prepared the below summary of these changes for your reference, however this article presents only the highlights of the major changes. Providers should familiarise themselves with the detailed changes to cardiac services MBS items and any associated rules and/or explanatory notes. Current clients of Medical Billing Experts can obtain support and detailed information regarding appropriate billing of the new Cardiac Imaging Services item numbers by emailing billing@medbill.com.au.

CHANGES TO ECG ITEM NUMBERS

As a result of the 1 August 2020 changes to the ECG item numbers, only Consultant Physicians and Specialists can bill for reporting of ECG's. GP's can only perform the newly created item 11707 to create a tracing which can then be referred to a Consultant Physician or Specialist for reporting.

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Another major change is that ECG's other than item 11705 are now considered to be part of accommodation costs for inpatients and thus items 11704, 11707 and 11714 can only be billed for non-admitted patients. As an additional constraint, ECG's performed as part of a pre-operative assessment no longer attract an MBS benefit. The tables below show an overview of the changes to ECG item numbers.

CHANGES TO ECG'S EFFECTIVE 1 AUGUST 2020

Twelve-lead ECG's:

OLD ITEM	NEW ITEM	SHORT DESCRIPTOR	ELIGIBLE REQUESTOR	ELIGIBLE TO PERFORM	FREQUENCY	LOCATION	CO-CLAIMING RESTRICTIONS	CAN CLAIM WITH S OR CP CONSULT?	RELEVANT NOTES
11700	11704	Tracing and report (3rd party)	CP, S, GP	CP, S	N/A	OP/NPA	11705, 11707, 11714	NO	A, B, C
11701	11705	Report only	CP, S, GP	CP, S	Up to 2 times/day	IP/OP/NPA	11704, 11714	NO unless ECG result calls for urgent attendance (must be life threatening)	A, C
11702	11707	Tracing only	MP, GP	CP, S, GP, MF	Up to 2 times/day	OP/NPA	11704, 11714	NO	D
N/A	11714	Trace and interpretation	No request needed	CP, S	Up to 2 times/day	OP/NPA	11704, 11705, 11707	YES	A

DoH considers ECG Services (11704, 11707, 11714 but NOT 11705) to be part of the accommodation costs for IP and thus not billable for inpatients.

Note A	The service must be requested by a requesting practitioner AND a formal report must be provided to the requesting practitioner. "In practice this would also be accompanied by a referral for the specialists or consultant physician to provide a consultation".
	For ECG item 11714, the written clinical note detailing the interpretation of the ECG can be incorporated into the letter back to the requesting practitioner if required, this clinical note is expected to detail more than the just the trace measurements or the diagnoses automatically generated from the trace. It is expected that the interpretation would comment on the clinical significance of the trace and the relationship between this and the clinical decisions made for the patient.
Note B	A copy of the trace must be included with the formal report to the requesting practitioner
Note C	Referring doctor must not be in the same group practice AND ECG is not billable the same day as a consultation by another practitioner in the practice.
Note D	ECG performed because it is required for clinical decision making and the ECG does not need to be fully interpreted or reported on.

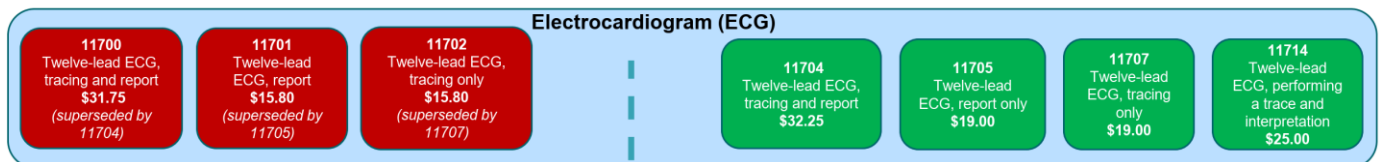
CP- Consultant Physician
 MP- Medical Practitioner
 S- Specialist
 OP/NPA- Not claimable for an admitted patient of a hospital or for the purpose of pre-operative assessment
 IP- Claimable for an admitted private patient

The above is a SUMMARY ONLY. All practitioners should read detailed information by visiting mbsonline.gov.au

Department of Health

Prior to 1 August 2020

From 1 August 2020



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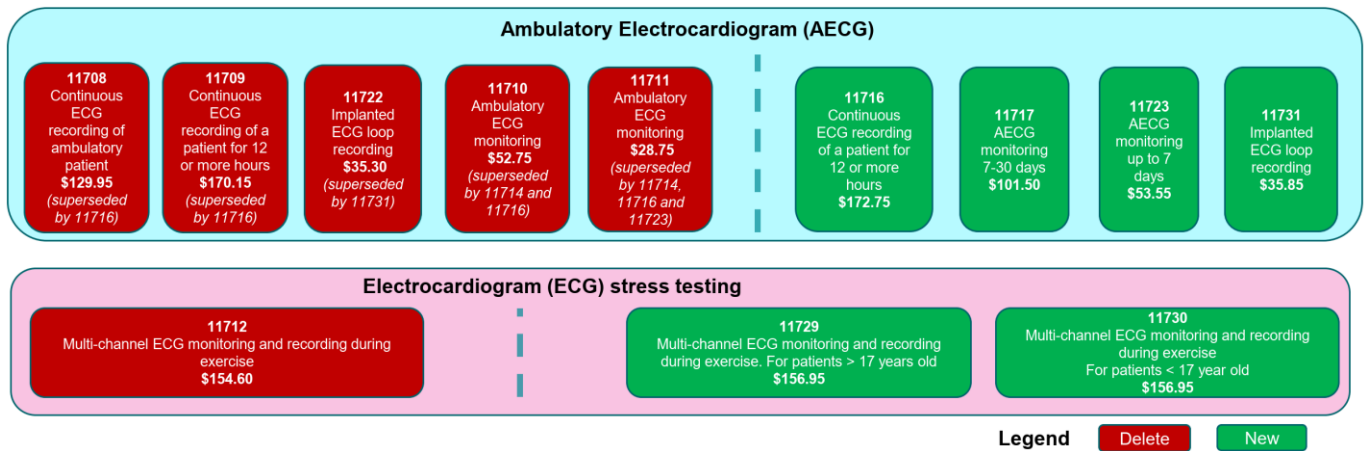
CHANGES TO AECG AND ECG STRESS TESTING ITEM NUMBERS

The flow chart reflecting changes to the AECG and ECG Stress item numbers is below.

Department of Health

Prior to 1 August 2020

From 1 August 2020



Item 11712 has been split into two age-based item numbers 11729 and 11730. This was done to reflect the fact that there are different indications and requirements for testing adult patients versus paediatric patients.

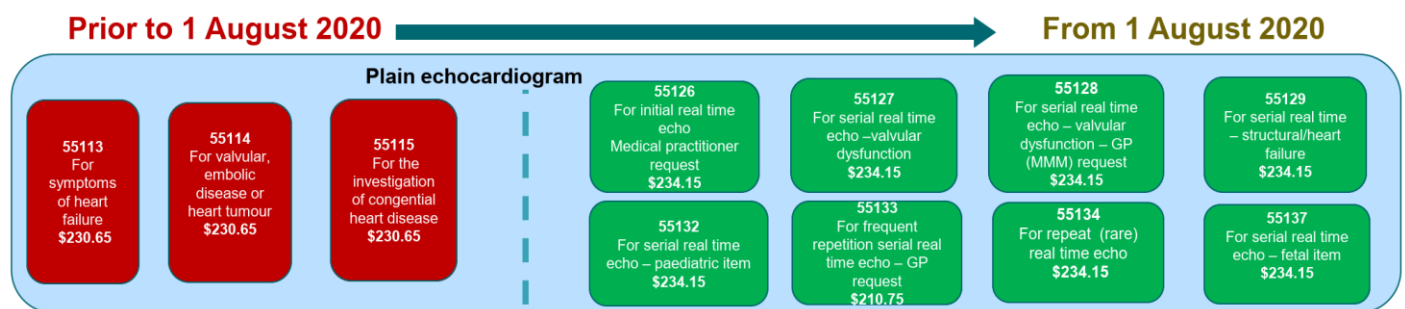
If a Paediatric ECG stress test (item 11730) is performed by a Paediatric Cardiologist, co-claiming of a consultation with the 11730 is permitted if:

- The paediatric patient was referred for an echo; AND
- The paediatric patient was not known to the provider (ie new patient); AND
- The paediatric patient was not under the care of another paediatric cardiologist; AND
- The findings of the 11730 appropriately warranted a consultation

ECG Stress tests require the continuous attendance by a person trained in exercise testing and CPR as well as having a second person trained in CPR who is immediately available for emergency call situations. One of those two people must be a medical practitioner.

CHANGES TO PLAIN ECHO ITEM NUMBERS

The below information from the Department of Health shows a flowchart of specific changes to the item numbers for plain echocardiograms.



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Whilst GP's previously had item numbers enabling billing of echos, the new plain echo item numbers can only be claimed by Consultant Physicians and Specialists.

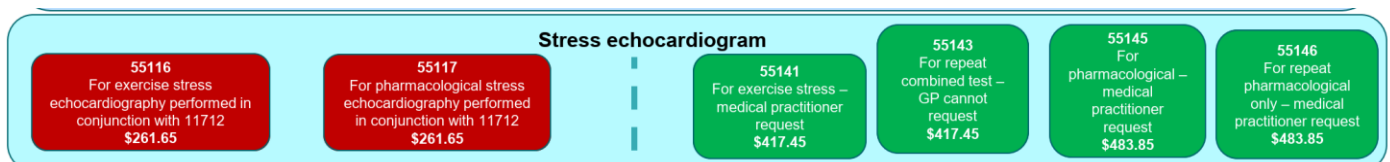
Initial echocardiograms can only be billed once in every two years for each patient. This restriction is prospective meaning that echos performed on or after 1 August 2020 are included in the restriction but echos performed prior to this date are not. After performing the initial echo under item 55126, repeat echos can be performed only when the clinical requirements are met (per CSANZ guidelines) and all elements of the relevant item number descriptor are met.

In rare instances, item 55134 can be billed if clinical indications for items 55127, 55128, 55132, 55133 and 55137 are not met but the Consultant Physician or Specialist considers a repeat echo to be clinically necessary. Use of item 55134 will be closely monitored by the Department of Health to determine whether further revision of the new echo item numbers is needed to include clinical conditions not considered in the formulation of the new items. Thus, extreme caution should be used in the billing of item 55134 as overuse of the item number will lead to an audit.

CHANGES TO STRESS ECHO ITEM NUMBERS

The below information from the Department of Health shows a flowchart of specific changes to the item numbers for stress echocardiograms.

Prior to 1 August 2020 → **From 1 August 2020**

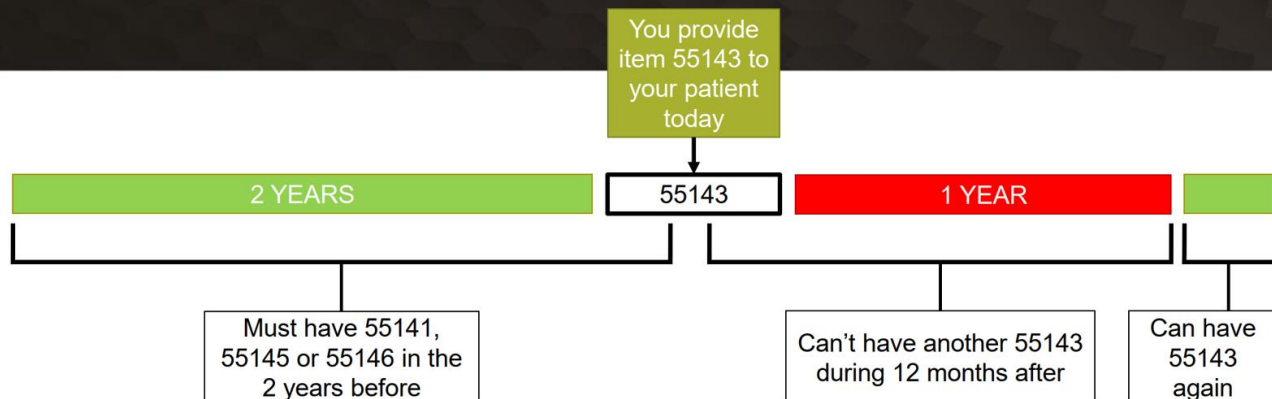


ECG Stress tests require the continuous attendance by a person trained in exercise testing and CPR as well as having a second person trained in CPR who is immediately available for emergency call situations. One of those two people must be a medical practitioner.

Examples supplied by the Department of Health for allowable billing frequencies for items 55143 and 55146 are as follows:

Rules for 55143

This is based on the patient's claiming history, and applies even if different health professionals have provided the services



Rules for 55146

This is based on the patient's claiming history, and applies even if different health professionals have provided the services



CHANGES TO BILLING CONSULTATIONS WITH CARDIAC IMAGING SERVICES

As at 1 August, there are constraints on when consultations can be billed with some Cardiac Imaging Services. Ambulatory ECG (AECG), Echo, ECG stress tests, and stress echos can only be claimed on the same date of service as a consultation under the following circumstances:

- i. *both the consultation and the service were specifically and separately requested by another provider; or*
- ii. *the consultation was specifically requested by another provider and the decision to perform the service was made during a consultation with the service provider on the same day as the service; or*
- iii. *the provider claiming both services is responsible for the ongoing care of the patient and provides a consultation after the service where clinical management decisions are made.*

An exception to this rule exists for Paediatric Cardiologists who are able to co-claim consultations with AECG, echos, ECG stress tests, and stress echos when the test has not been specifically requested by the referrer.

NEW ECHO MULTIPLE SERVICE RULE

In addition to the changes to the Item Numbers, there is also a new Echo Multiple Service Rule that applies to all billing where a plain echocardiogram and a stress echocardiogram are billed on the same date of service by an individual provider or two providers within the same group practice. To accommodate this change, a new subgroup 7 has been created in the Medicare Benefits Schedule which contains only the item numbers for the new plain echo and stress echo item numbers.

The Echo Multiple Services Rule applies to same day billing of any plain echocardiogram item (55126, 55127, 552128, 55129, 55132, 55133, 55134 or 55137) with any stress echocardiogram item (55141, 55143, 55145, or 55146).

The formula applied to the two services is:

- ❖ 100% for the item with the greatest Schedule fee
- ❖ Plus 60% for the item with the next greatest Schedule fee

When the Schedule fee for the two items are the same, the formula applied to the two services is:

- ❖ 100% for the item with the lowest item number
- ❖ Plus 60% for the item with the second lowest item number

The changes to the Cardiac Imaging Services are broad sweeping and have proved to be challenging for many providers due to the numerous and detailed rules and restrictions. As with all changes to the MBS, the highly skilled staff at Medical Billing Experts has conquered the challenge.

If you require assistance with billing the updated item numbers, with calculating the new Echo Multiple Service Rule, or to avoid unnecessary audits in relation to billing the new item numbers please contact our office by emailing billing@medbill.com.au or complete contact form on our website www.medbill.com.au/contact-us/ and one of our highly skilled billing staff will contact you to address your questions.

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