

## Thunderstorm Asthma



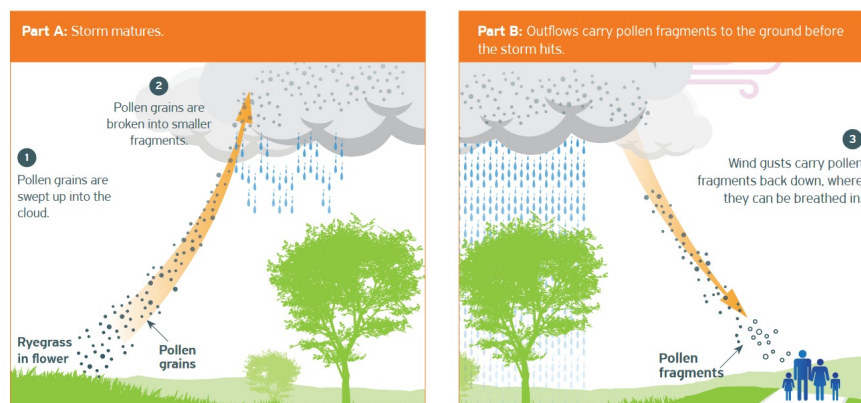
Thunderstorm asthma season starts on the 1st of October.

This is the combination of high pollen counts with humidity and air pressure changes that can rupture pollen spores, increasing the irritability of the pollen for people who react.

Melbourne had an enormous episode in 2016 and a smaller episode Oct 2022.

This year there are warnings via the [Vic Emergency website/App](#) and more information here on the [Dept of Health](#) about thunderstorm asthma. You can set the Vic Emergency App to send you alerts for your area if the combination of pollen and atmospheric conditions are low/medium/high. These forecasts will start on the 1st of October

**Figure 1.** How thunderstorms increase grass pollen exposure



Actions you can take if you are prone to asthma/hayfever or thunderstorm asthma are knowing your asthma plan and asthma first aid, having up to date puffers/inhalers. Stay indoors on high risk days, particularly out of winds before and after a storm, consider a N95 mask (not just the loose blue surgical mask) if going out of the house. If the practice is closed, options for help are:

- [Heidelberg Priority Primary Care Centre](#) (supporting Austin Hospital)  
Opening hours: Monday-Sunday, 8am-midnight  
Location: 455 Upper Heidelberg Road, Heidelberg Heights
- [The Victorian Virtual Emergency Department](#)
- 000 in an emergency

book for an asthma review

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## Sixty day dispensing has arrived

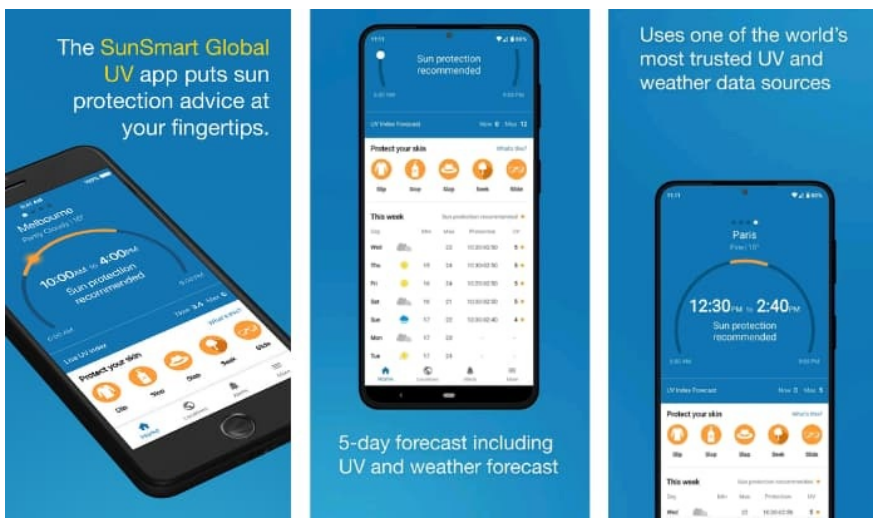


A new option for people on long term stable medications is for 60 day dispensing - this means the pharmacy can now give you two months worth of medications at a time. Prescriptions will now be valid for 12 month periods - so for your Lipitor/Atorvastatin cholesterol medication, you would get a prescription for 60 tablets with five repeats.

The benefits to you are less trips to the pharmacy and reduced cost by reducing the dispensing cost - the price the pharmacy charges to prepare the medication.

Generally, long term preventative and protective medications, particularly for heart conditions like blood pressure, cholesterol lowering, blood thinning are on [the list](#) from the government. Diabetic medications, anti-depressants are not on the list. Dangerous, new or expensive medications - chemotherapy agents, opiates, stimulant medications, sedating medications remain as 30days or less per prescription.

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## UV index for summer

The UV Index tells you the times during the day that you need to be SunSmart.

- low (1-2)
- moderate (3-5)
- high (6-7)
- very high (8-10)
- extreme (11 and above)

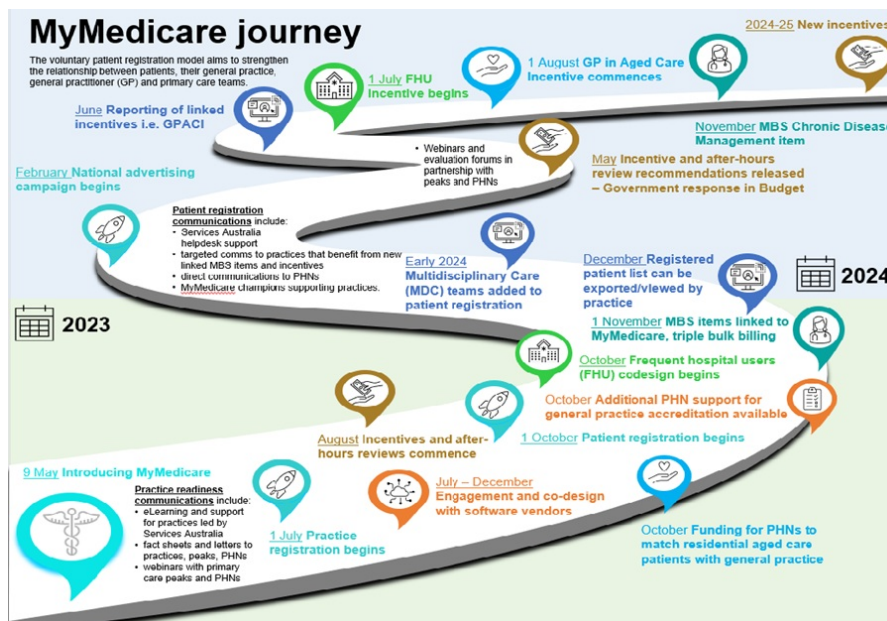
At three and above we should be SunSmart with the Slip Slop Slap Seek Slide messages

You can follow the UV index with the [app for iPhone or Android](#), or on the [Cancer Council website](#) and the [Bureau of Meteorology website](#).

So stay sun smart as we go into the sunnier months and reduce your risks of skin cancer.

## MyMedicare

MyMedicare is a review/refresh of some parts of Medicare and how it supports people for their health goals, particularly as people are living longer but with more complex health needs



The government states that the benefits of MyMedicare will be:

- better sharing of information about regular patients between hospitals, specialists, GPs, making it easier to tailor services to fit their needs
- the new longer telehealth items linked to MyMedicare
- the General Practice Aged Care Access Incentive, starting from 1 August 2024, which will support regular health assessments, care plans and regular GP visits for people in residential aged care homes
- starting from 2024-25, new blended funding payments to support better care in the community for people with complex, chronic disease who frequently attend hospitals
- from November 2024, chronic disease management items linked to a patient's registration, to support continuity of care for people with chronic and complex conditions.

For PFM we are ready to embrace anything that helps with patient care, particularly the team based care that people with more than one health condition need.

Details are still thin on the ground and nothing has changed so far.

Like any big government program this is likely dependant on the wishes of the government in charge. So keep an eye out but there are no large changes happening soon.

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