

FAQs | Maternity Ultrasound Services, Funding Boost

How are community scans funded and how is this changing?

Current funding

Health New Zealand currently pays \$92 per scan (incl. GST) to community ultrasound providers under the Primary Maternity Services Notice. This amount has not increased since 1997. Providers have been able to charge women a co-payment to help cover their costs.

What is changing

Health New Zealand is boosting the funding it pays to community providers. This funding is additional to the existing \$92 per scan payment. Providers who opt in will be required to cap their co-payments as below:

	HNZ Funding Boost	Co-payment cap	Total
Community Service Card holder	\$103.50	\$30.00	\$133.50
Non-Community Service Card holder	\$34.50	\$90.00	\$124.50

*note all prices are inclusive of GST

How much will this change cost?

It is estimated the immediate change will cost an extra \$12.9 million a year, meaning HNZ will contribute \$35.8 million towards obstetric ultrasounds funded through existing baselines. The current HNZ funding is about \$22.2 million.

Future policy changes may change the total amount funded in the future.

How much do women pay for their scans now?

Co-payment charges currently range from about \$30 to \$155 per scan, depending on the provider and location. A small number of scans are undertaken in hospitals when there is no community provision. Hospital-based ultrasounds are fully funded with no user fees.

How much will women pay for their scans after these changes?

What a woman pays depends on whether she has a Community Services Card and the provider she attends.

If a provider charges a co-payment under the new arrangements, the maximum a woman can be asked to pay is:

- Up to \$30 (incl. GST) for Community Services Card holders
- Up to \$90 (incl. GST) for women without a Community Services Card

Some providers may charge less, or no co-payment at all.

Scans provided in hospitals remain fully funded, with no charge to the woman.

Frequently asked questions

How many scans are generally needed during a pregnancy?

Most women should receive two screening scans – one Nuchal translucency scan between 12 and 13+6 weeks in pregnancy, and an anatomy scan at around the 20-week mark. Additional scans should only be offered if clinically indicated. (Dating scans are not recommended).

How many scans are delivered annually?

In the 2024, Health NZ funded approximately 277,000 maternity ultrasound scans in the community. This figure excludes scans performed in public hospitals.

What has been the subsidy for each ultrasound since 1997?

Since 1997, Health NZ (and prior to its establishment, the Ministry of Health) has paid \$92 per scan (incl. GST) per maternity ultrasound scan. Some districts applied additional local subsidies, but these varied by area and were not applied consistently across the country.

Will existing regional subsidies continue under the new co-payment caps?

Yes. Existing regional subsidies will continue during the transition. Districts that already subsidise scans will keep these in place to ensure that no woman is worse off as we introduce national co-payment caps. This maintains local flexibility while also providing new national safeguards for women's access and affordability.

Are the new co-payment caps and funding increases permanent?

No. These are interim settings designed to stabilise the sector and prevent rising costs for pregnant women. A full review of community delivered maternity ultrasound funding and delivery is underway to provide long-term sustainable policy settings.

