

IMPORTANT MEDICARE INFORMATION

Following a recommendation from the Medical Services Advisory Committee, the Minister for Health and Ageing the Hon. Tony Abbott has endorsed that C-14 Breath testing should become a first line procedure for the diagnosis of *Helicobacter pylori* infection.

Effective from November 2006, the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) has been changed to now reimburse the use of Carbon-labelled urea breath testing as a **First Line Procedure for Diagnosing *Helicobacter pylori* Infection**, rather than just for monitoring its eradication.

C-14 Breath testing now has a Medicare rebate for both:

- the **confirmation** of *Helicobacter pylori* colonisation, and
- the **monitoring** of the success of eradication of *Helicobacter pylori*.

C-14 Breath testing is a safe, cost effective and accurate method for the diagnosis of *Helicobacter pylori* infection.

Since the prevalence of *Helicobacter pylori* in the general Australian population increases with age, the C-14 breath test will be a very useful tool to investigate particularly those over the age of 40 years of age as the World Health Organisation has identified *Helicobacter pylori* as a Class I Carcinogen with reference to Gastric Cancer and specifically (gastric) MALT-Lymphoma.

