

For immediate release  
22 May, 2017

## Ouch, that's expensive! 41% of Aussies avoid medical specialists due to cost

- ➔ 41% of Aussies have put off seeing a medical specialist to avoid the expense
- ➔ Women more likely than men to have skipped a specialist visit due to cost
- ➔ Australian households were out-of-pocket \$483 on average for specialist visits last year

**22 May, 2017, Sydney, Australia** – Two in five Australians referred to see a medical specialist haven't followed through because of the cost, according to new research by finder.com.au, Australia's most visited comparison website.

The finder.com.au survey of 2,010 Australians found that 41% - the equivalent of 7.6 million Australian adults - have avoided seeing a medical specialist due to the cost burden.

The research also found that women (47%) are much more likely than men (35%) to have dodged a specialist visit because it was too expensive.

In 2016, Australian households spent an average of \$488 annually [on out-of-pocket expenses](#) for specialist and consultant physician consultations -- up from \$343 in 2009-2010.

Bessie Hassan, Money Expert at finder.com.au, says the cost burden of seeing private specialists was putting off many Australians.

"That's four out of ten Australians who are ignoring a health issue because of the cost. I doubt this is a decision they make lightly but it seems people really do put a price tag on their health."

Ms Hassan said specialist doctors were often the ones who diagnosed more serious conditions.

"A referral should be taken seriously. If you are worried about affording the secondary appointment or resulting surgery, ask about what government services are available."

According to a report from the University of Melbourne, which analysed Medicare claims data from 2015 for an initial consultation in 11 non-surgical specialties, costs for patients could vary by up to 400% within the one specialty.

[finder.com.au](https://finder.com.au) has [published an interactive tool](#) looking at the average out-of-pocket costs for different surgical procedures across each state.

Ms Hassan said that Australians without private health cover could be leaving themselves exposed.

“[Private health cover](#) gives patients the option to choose their own specialist, seek treatment in a private hospital, and greater flexibility in terms of when they would like to be treated,” she said.

“However, there can still be a gap fee so it’s best to ask your doctor for a cost estimate and then check with your health insurer to find out how much your rebate will be for that treatment, and whether it’s included in your policy.”

*Australians can compare policies from over 30 health funds at [finder.com.au/health-insurance](https://finder.com.au/health-insurance)*

### State by state

- Western Australians were most likely to give a specialist visit the flick because it was too expensive - with 49% admitting they had, closely followed by Queensland residents (45%).
- South Australians are the most vigilant with only 34% not giving the specialist a chance, followed by Victorians (38%) and NSW residents (40%).

We now have a news feed on Twitter! Follow us for the latest updates or drop us a line to say hi: [@finder\\_news](https://twitter.com/finder_news).

### For further information:

**Bessie Hassan**

Head of PR – Australia & Money Expert

+61402 567 568

[sophie.walsh@finder.com.au](mailto:sophie.walsh@finder.com.au)



Credit Cards



Loans & Savings



Insurance



Electricity & Gas



Shopping Deals

[Privacy Policy](#) | [About finder.com.au](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Media Room](#)