

# Wound and pressure care supports

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**Quick summary:** the Australian health system provides treatment of wounds, including wound management to everyone. We can only fund wound and pressure care supports if they're related to your disability. We may fund these NDIS supports if your disability means you can't monitor or manage your wound or pressure care on your own. Or, if your wounds are caused by your disability.

Wound and pressure care supports can include funding to help develop and carry out a wound and pressure care plan. They can include equipment to prevent pressure areas or wounds occurring, or products to help manage wounds, like bandages. We may also fund support workers and their training to help you manage your wounds if you can't do this on your own.

**Note:**

- When we say 'your plan', we mean your NDIS plan.
- As part of the recent changes to the NDIS laws we're moving towards a new framework for planning. Rules need to be developed for this new framework. We're working on how and when we'll introduce these changes.

Until then, the information in this Our Guideline is about our 'old framework' for planning, which include the legislative changes that became operational when the law commenced. All current plans will be known as 'old framework' plans, and we will continue to develop these until all participants have transitioned to the new framework.

## What's on this page?

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You might also be interested in:

- [Disability-related health supports](#)
- [Mainstream and community supports](#)
- [Assistive Technology](#)
- [Diabetes management supports](#)
- [Would we fund it guide – Wound care supports](#)
- [What does NDIS fund?](#)

## What do we mean by wound and pressure care supports?

Wound and pressure care supports are supports to help prevent damage to your skin caused by pressure or swollen limbs and to manage wounds.

Wounds are any damage to your skin including grazes, cuts, or any breaks in the skin. If your skin wound doesn't heal, heals slowly, or heals but comes back in the same location this is called a chronic wound. Chronic skin wounds have many causes. These may include trauma, sustained pressure, burns, skin cancers, infection or underlying medical conditions, such as diabetes.

Pressure care is support you may need if your disability means it's hard for you to move or shift your position in bed. Or, when seated to relieve pressure. This may mean you have an increased risk of skin damage and pressure injuries. Support to help you prevent or manage a pressure injury may include:

- products or equipment like pressure cushions
- help to monitor areas at risk of pressure wounds
- a person or equipment to help you move.

Wound and pressure care supports can also include support to manage lymphoedema. Lymphoedema is the build-up of fluid, causing swelling in one or more parts of the body.

Learn more about [Lymphoedema](#).

Wound and pressure care supports are what we call disability-related health supports. We can only fund these supports if they meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

Learn more about [what we mean by disability-related health supports](#).

You may need a specialist medical, nursing, or allied health professional to help look after your wounds and pressure care. If you need help with wounds, you should talk to your doctor first. They can link you to health services that are paid for through Medicare. You can continue to access health services from Medicare, even when you're an NDIS participant.

Learn more about the [help you can get through the health system or other services](#).

## What help can you get to manage your wound and pressure care through the health system or other services?

The [Australian health system](#) is responsible for treatment of wounds, including wound management supports that relate to your disability.<sup>1</sup> For example, if you have surgery and need assistance to manage your acute wound, hospital staff are responsible for treating this.

Government and community services must make sure all Australians, including people with disability, have access to their supports. We call these supports mainstream and community supports. The NDIS was set up to work alongside government and community services, not replace them.

Learn more about [mainstream and community supports](#).

## What help can you get through Medicare?

If your wound or pressure injury needs treatment by a doctor or surgeon, Medicare funds this. The Australian health system provides some supports for people with wound and pressure care needs, particularly acute needs such as new or infected wounds.

Learn more about [Medicare](#).

## What can you get through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme?

If you have a wound or pressure injury and need medication or dressings, you should see your doctor. They'll prescribe what you need. Most medications and some dressings are funded through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Learn more about the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme \(PBS\)](#).

## What can you get through the National Epidermolysis Bullosa Dressing Scheme?

If you have epidermolysis bullosa, you'll need specialised dressings and bandages to manage the disease, reduce skin damage and the risk of infection. You may be eligible to get most wound care items, like dressings and bandages through the National Epidermolysis Bullosa Dressing Scheme.

You can continue to access the National Epidermolysis Bullosa Dressing Scheme, even if you're an NDIS participant.

To learn more or apply, go to the [National Epidermolysis Bullosa Dressing Scheme](#).

## How do we decide what wound and pressure care supports we fund?

NDIS laws determine what we can and can't fund. Things we can fund are called NDIS supports. You can use the funding in your plan to buy NDIS supports if they are related to your disability and are in-line with your plan.<sup>2</sup>

Like other NDIS supports, we can only include wound and pressure care supports in your plan if they meet all the [NDIS funding criteria](#).<sup>3</sup>

Learn more about [how we decide what disability-related health care supports we fund](#).

## What types of wound and pressure care supports do we fund?

Wound and pressure care supports can include:

- an enrolled nurse, registered nurse, or clinical nurse consultant to develop a wound management plan or pressure care plan
- a support worker, enrolled nurse, or registered nurse to help with a wound management plan or pressure care plan
- training for a support worker to help with a pressure care plan
- wound care items, like gauze, bandages, dressing and tape to dress wounds
- items to prevent wounds. For example, pressure relief cushions, moisturiser, barrier creams and non-PH wash if used to prevent wounds, not as a replacement for soap
- pressure care products or equipment, like compression garments and pressure wrap
- review and planning of pressure care positioning.

For us to fund wound and pressure care supports, we'll need a copy of your wound management plan, wound assessment, or pressure care plan. This could be from your doctor, specialist, enrolled nurse, registered nurse, or clinical nurse. A wound management plan, wound assessment or pressure care plan describes the type of ongoing support you need as part of your daily life. It describes how much and how often you need care for any wounds. It also describes the steps to follow and the wound care items that you use.

Learn more about [How we decide what wound and pressure care supports we fund.](#)

### **What if you need wound and pressure care products?**

If you need support to manage and prevent wounds, we may fund wound and pressure injury care, including wound prevention kits.

If you need wound care items, we'll need evidence or an assessment from your doctor, specialist, enrolled nurse, registered nurse, or clinical nurse.

Learn more about [How you get wound and pressure care supports in your plan.](#)

### **What if you need help to manage your wound and pressure care supports?**

You might be able to manage your wound and pressure care by yourself. Or you may need help to manage your wound and pressure care. If you don't have family or carers that can help, we may fund a support worker to help you.

You may need an enrolled or registered nurse to take care of your wounds. Or your support worker may be trained to help you with your:

- wound prevention plan prepared by your clinical nurse
- lymphoedema management plan prepared by your physiotherapist or occupational therapist, including repositioning supports or drainage massages.

We'll need evidence from your health practitioner to describe who can safely provide the support. This could be from your doctor, specialist, registered nurse, clinical nurse consultant, physiotherapist, or occupational therapist.

Learn more in [Do you need to provide us with evidence?](#)

You can give us any new information or evidence about your support needs when you get it. If you're not sure what to give us, you can talk to your my NDIS contact.

We'll then look at your current supports. For example, you might already have a support worker to help you with self-care or daily living activities. They may be able to be trained to help you with minor wound care management. Or you might need additional hours of support.

Learn more about [if you need someone with training to provide the support you need](#).

## What if you need help to manage lymphoedema?

If you have lymphoedema, your trained lymphoedema allied health professional will help to manage and treat your lymphoedema in two phases. Phase one is when your allied health professional will treat your lymphoedema in a clinical setting, like a hospital. Phase two is when your allied health professional will create a home maintenance program for you. These two phases are funded by the health system, so are not NDIS supports.<sup>4</sup>

Learn more about [What help can you get through Medicare](#).

If your disability means you have trouble managing your home maintenance program on your own, we may fund NDIS supports to help you. This may include support with daily skin care to prevent infection, repositioning, exercises, and wearing prescribed compression garments. Or it could be the use of a pneumatic compression pump device. You might need to wear pneumatic compression devices or have manual lymphatic massages to help your lymph fluid move and improve circulation.

If you need compression garments to manage your lymphoedema, you may be eligible to get support through your state compression garment scheme.

Learn more about [Compression garment schemes](#).

## What if you need assistive technology?

Assistive technology for wound and pressure care is equipment which will help reduce the pressure on your body and improve circulation. It can include items you buy or rent like:

- pressure cushions and mattresses
- air-filled garments and compression units, for managing circulation problems and lymphoedema
- a lymphoedema machine, if needed for maintenance
- negative pressure wound therapy, including vacuum assisted closure (VAC)
- repairs, maintenance, and replacement of assistive technology.

We'll only fund assistive technology if you can give us evidence that:

- having the assistive technology means it will reduce your need for other supports, for example, less need for a support worker or nurse<sup>5</sup>
- you'll be able to be more independent<sup>6</sup>
- it's an NDIS support for you.<sup>7</sup>

You'll need to give us [evidence](#) to show the assistive technology meets all the [NDIS funding criteria](#). This could be from your doctor, specialist, registered nurse, or clinical nurse consultant.

Learn more about [assistive technology](#).

## How do you get wound and pressure care supports in your plan?

When we think about what wound and pressure care supports to include in your plan, we'll also look at what other supports you get through the health system and other [mainstream and community supports](#). Your my NDIS contact, support coordinator or psychosocial recovery coach will work with you and other services to help you get the support you need.

Once we've identified the supports and decided they meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#), we'll include the description and funding for the NDIS support in your plan.

Learn more about [how we include the reasonable and necessary supports in your plan](#).

If your situation has changed, or, you think your current plan doesn't have enough funding for the wound and pressure care supports you need, you can ask for a change to your plan.<sup>8</sup>

Learn more about [changing your plan](#).

## Do you need to provide us with evidence?

Yes. To get wound and pressure care supports in your plan, you need to give us evidence that helps us understand the disability-related health supports you need. Talk to your my NDIS contact or support coordinator to work out what evidence we need.

Learn more in our [Factsheet - What evidence you need to give us before we create or change your plan](#).

You can give us any new information or evidence about your support needs when you get it or anytime we talk with you.

We'll ask about what wound and pressure care supports you currently have, and what supports you might need. We'll also ask who you get your supports from, and how often you get them. You may need quotes for particular wound care consumables or prevention supports, for example, dressings or a pressure relief cushion.

We'll use this information to decide if wound and pressure care supports meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#) for you. If they do, we'll work out the amount of funding to make sure you get the disability-related wound and pressure care supports you need.

## What happens once you have wound and pressure care supports in your plan?

Once you have the disability-related health support funding in your plan, you can use it to get the wound and pressure care supports you need. Your plan will describe how you can use your funding to get wound and pressure care supports. Remember, you can only use your funds on NDIS supports, in-line with your plan.<sup>9</sup> We'll also talk to you at your plan meeting.

If you need help to use the funding, talk to your my NDIS contact or support coordinator.

You might also like to look at [Our Guideline – Your plan](#).

For more information, you can also look at [What happens once you have disability-related health support funding in your plan?](#)

## What if you don't agree with our decision?

If we decide wound and pressure care supports don't meet our [NDIS funding criteria](#), we can't include them in your plan.

We'll give you written reasons why we made the decision.<sup>10</sup> You can [contact us](#) if you'd like more detail about the reasons for our decision.

If you don't agree with a decision we make about your request for wound and pressure care supports, you can ask for an internal review of our decision.<sup>11</sup> You'll need to ask for an internal review within 3 months of getting your plan.<sup>12</sup>

Learn more about [reviewing our decisions](#).

## Reference list

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<sup>1</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rr 3.5, 7.5.

<sup>2</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(f).

<sup>3</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1).

<sup>4</sup> NDIS Act s 10.

<sup>5</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(f).

<sup>6</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(f).

<sup>7</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(f).

<sup>8</sup> NDIS Act ss 47A, 48.

<sup>9</sup> NDIS Act s 46.

<sup>10</sup> NDIS Act s 100(1).

<sup>11</sup> NDIS Act s 100.

<sup>12</sup> NDIS Act s 100(2).