

Wound and Pressure Care Supports

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 are related to your disability. We may fund these 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. It 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. If you're looking for information about your Community Connections plan, go to [Our Guideline – Community Connections](#).

If you're looking for information about your child's early connections, go to [Our Guideline – Early Connections](#).

What's on this page?

This page covers:

- [What do we mean by wound and pressure care supports?](#)
- [What help can you get to manage your wound and pressure care through the health system or other services?](#)
- [How do we decide what wound and pressure care supports we fund?](#)
- [What types of wound and pressure care supports do we fund?](#)
- [How do you get wound and pressure care supports in your plan?](#)
- [What happens once you have wound and pressure care supports in your plan?](#)

You might also be interested in:

- [Disability-related health supports](#)
- [Mainstream and Community supports](#)
- [Assistive technology](#)
- [Would we fund it guide – wound care supports](#)

What do we mean by wound and pressure care supports?

Wound and pressure care supports are what we call disability-related health supports. We can only fund these supports if they directly relate to your disability and help you undertake activities involved in day-to-day life.¹ Learn more about [what we mean by disability-related health 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 including trauma, for example, 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.

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

Wound and pressure care supports could 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](#).

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

Government and community services must ensure 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](#).

The health system is responsible for treatment of wounds, including wound management supports that are not related to your disability.² For example, if you have surgery and need assistance to manage your acute wound, we won't fund this. We only fund wound and pressure care supports directly related to your disability. The NDIS can't fund a support if it's most appropriately funded or provided by one of these other services.

There may be other specialist health services or private health insurance available to help manage your health or treat a health condition. You will need to pay for these things yourself.

If your wound does not heal after treatment, you may need regular support for wound management. If your disability means you can't manage your wound or pressure care on your own, we may fund wound and pressure care 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 Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme?

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

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

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

If you have epidermolysis bullosa you will 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 when you are a NDIS participant. Because you can get most specialised dressings and bandages for epidermolysis bullosa through another service system, we generally will not fund it.

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?

All NDIS funded supports must meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

Wound and pressure care supports are one of the disability-related health supports we may fund.

Generally, we can fund wound and pressure care supports for you if you need them ongoing and they're related to your disability. We'll need evidence to support this, such as reports or assessments from a qualified health professional.

Learn more about [How do we decide what disability-related health supports we fund?](#)

For examples of how we decide what wound care supports we may fund, read [Would we fund it guide – Wound care supports](#).

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

We may fund wound and pressure care 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.

For us to fund wound and pressure care supports we will 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, the steps to follow and the wound care items that you use.

Wound and pressure care supports may 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 you with your wound management plan or wound and pressure care plan
- training for a support worker to help you with your 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 of soap
- review and planning of pressure care positioning.

We will only fund these supports if you need them because of your disability.

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 do 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.

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 your minor wound care management. Or you might need additional hours of support.

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

Like all supports we fund, wound and pressure care supports must meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

Read examples about nursing in the home in our [Would we fund it guide – nursing in the home](#).

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 most appropriately funded by the health system, so we won't fund them.

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 support to help you. This may include support with daily skin care and 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. If you need compression garments because of your disability and they aren't funded by another service, we may be able to fund them.

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 may 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 nurse³
- you'll be able to be more independent⁴
- other mainstream health services don't fund the assistive technology and you need the support because of your disability.⁵

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](#) and the [evidence we need](#) before we create your plan.

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

Do you need to provide us with evidence?

Yes. To get wound and pressure supports in your plan, you need to give us evidence that helps us understand the disability related supports you need. Talk to your my NDIS contact or support coordinator to work out what evidence we need. Learn more about the [evidence we need](#) before we create 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. 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 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.⁶ 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.⁷ You'll need to ask for an internal review within 3 months of getting your plan.⁸

Learn more about reviewing our decisions.

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

Once you have wound and pressure care supports in your plan, you can get the supports you need. Your plan will describe how you can use your funding to get wound and pressure care supports. We will 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 about your plan.

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

Reference list

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- ¹ NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 7.4.
² NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rr 3.5, 7.5.
³ NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(f).
⁴ NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(f).
⁵ NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rr 3.5, 7.4.
⁶ NDIS Act s100(1).
⁷ NDIS Act s 100.
⁸ NDIS Act s 100(2).