



Changes to the NDSS from 1 July 2016

From 1 July 2016, there will be changes to the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS). These changes will continue to enable people living with diabetes to access the products they need.

What are the changes from 1 July 2016?

- From 1 July, NDSS products will be supplied to NDSS community pharmacies through the Community Service Obligation (CSO) distribution network. This is the same mechanism used to supply medicines to pharmacies under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).
- People with diabetes will continue to access NDSS products such as needles, syringes, blood glucose test strips and urine test strips, and for the first time, insulin pump consumables (IPCs), from NDSS community pharmacies. However, NDSS products will no longer be available in the current way from Diabetes Australia or its state and territory agents (this includes via Diabetes Australia shops, the NDSS 1300 number, or Diabetes Australia Agent websites).
- To assist IPC users and ensure people are not disadvantaged during this change, there will be a short-term transition period of two months that will allow registrants continued access to IPCs through their state/territory diabetes organisation, however home delivery will incur postage costs to the IPC user.
- Support and advice from Diabetes Australia about NDSS products, and self-management of diabetes, will continue to be provided to all NDSS registrants over the phone and through ongoing education programs.

Changes to Access to Blood Glucose Test Strips

- From 1 July 2016, people with **type 2 diabetes not using insulin** will receive an initial six month supply of subsidised blood glucose test strips. After six months, they will only be eligible for further access to subsidised test strips if their doctor or other authorised health professional considers it clinically necessary to use test strips.
- The independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommended restrictions to access to blood glucose test strips based on research including the results of a Post Market Review on products used in the management of diabetes which found there is limited evidence that self-monitoring of blood glucose improves blood glucose control, quality of life or long-term complications in **people with type 2 diabetes who are not using insulin**.

Administrative Arrangements for the NDSS

- From 1 July 2016 all medical practitioners, credentialed diabetes educators, and nurse practitioners will be able to register people for the NDSS, and also approve six month extensions of access to blood glucose test strips for people with type 2 diabetes who are not using insulin. Patients with type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes using insulin, and gestational diabetes are not subject to the restrictions.

- A further six months access may be approved if one of the following criteria is met:
 1. the patient has an inter-current illness that may adversely affect blood glucose control;
 2. the patient is undergoing treatment with a medicine that may adversely affect blood glucose control;
 3. the patient's diabetes is inadequately controlled;
 4. there is a clinical need for the patient to self-monitor their blood glucose control; or
 5. there has been a change to the patient's existing diabetes management within the previous three (3) months.
- Restrictions will come into effect six months from the date of a NDSS Registrant's first test strip purchase from 1 July 2016. This will be automatically recorded on the NDSS system accessed by pharmacies when supplying products to Registrants. The initial six month access period applies to both new and existing NDSS registrants. Even where a registrant has been accessing test strips for several years, their six month initial access period will commence from their first order of test strips on or after 1 July 2016.
- Approval for extended access cannot be retrospective and the six month period cannot be accessed in segments. There is no limit on the number of approvals that may be obtained as long as the individual continues to meet one or more criteria for extended access.
- A new authorisation form for Health Professionals to grant a six month extension will be available from the NDSS website, and will be similar to the current *NDSS Change in Medication* form. A person's eligibility to access blood glucose test strips will be recorded on the NDSS system which is accessed by pharmacies. Following a six month period, the system will automatically record the person as ineligible unless an authorisation form has been received. If a person wishes to access blood glucose test strips at a pharmacy they will be directed to see an authorised Health Professional. Further information will be available for Health Professionals about authorisation processes on the NDSS website over the next month.
- In addition, from 1 July 2016, all blood glucose test strips will be delisted from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Blood glucose test strips will remain available through the NDSS and people with diabetes will have continued access through the NDSS. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are currently eligible for a lower copayment, or no copayment, under the *Closing the Gap* arrangements will continue to receive similar subsidisation under the NDSS.

For questions, contact Diabetes Australia on 1300 136 588 or your local state/territory diabetes organisation in the first instance. More information is available at www.health.gov.au/diabetes-services, including answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs).

Yours sincerely



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