



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Changes to the NDSS

Q. What are the changes to the NDSS since 1 July 2016?

Since 1 July 2016, there are two major changes to how you access NDSS products.

1. NDSS products are no longer available through Diabetes Australia. Instead, subsidised NDSS products are only available through community pharmacies that are NDSS Access Points.. NDSS Products include blood glucose test strips, urine test strips, insulin pen needles and syringes, and insulin pump consumables.
2. If you have type 2 diabetes and are not using insulin, there are restrictions on your access to subsidised blood glucose test strips.

Advice and Accessing NDSS Products

Q. Can I still phone to get information from Diabetes Australia or the NDSS?

Yes. This information phone line (1300 136 588) continues to operate, and still provides information about the NDSS. Diabetes Australia continues to assist with the administration of the NDSS, and continues to provide advice, information and a range of diabetes education and support services to people with diabetes. However, you are no longer able to order products over the phone through this number.

Q. I normally order my NDSS products online, is this still possible?

Since 1 July 2016, the ordering process has changed. You can no longer order products online from Diabetes Australia and state and territory diabetes organisations, or from the NDSS 1300 number, or Diabetes Australia shops.

Instead, you will need to order and collect products from an NDSS community pharmacy Access Point.

Currently over 5,000 community pharmacies in Australia are NDSS Access Points. Your nearest NDSS community pharmacy can be found online at: <http://osd.ndss.com.au/search/>, or by calling the NDSS information line on 1300 136 588.

Q. Why have supply arrangements been changed?

The changes provide a more efficient distribution of NDSS products as they are now supplied through the existing community pharmacy distribution network, the same way that medicines are provided to pharmacies.

Q. Has the cost of my NDSS products changed?

No. NDSS products continue to be subsidised by the Government, and there is no change in the price (co-payment) you pay or the range of products available. However, your pharmacy may charge for home delivery or postage, if these are required.

Q. What should I do if I am travelling or if I move?

If travelling, it would be best to ensure you order enough supplies from your regular pharmacy to last you for the duration of your trip. If travelling in Australia, a community pharmacy Access Point can order NDSS items not in stock, for delivery usually within 24 - 72 hours.

If moving to a new location and you need to use a new Access Point, it is recommended that you introduce yourself to the staff at the new pharmacy of your choice as soon as you are able to, to discuss and make arrangements for your NDSS supply needs, especially if you use less common products on the NDSS or have special ordering requirements.

Blood Glucose Test Strips

Q: What are the new restrictions on blood glucose test strips?

Since 1 July 2016, if you have **type 2 diabetes and are not using insulin** you will be able to purchase an initial six month supply of subsidised blood glucose test strips. This means you will be able to access blood glucose test strips, as required, over a six month period, starting any time after 1 July 2016.

After six months, you will only be able to continue to access subsidised test strips if your doctor, nurse practitioner or credentialed diabetes educator considers that there is a clinical need for you to continue to monitor your blood glucose levels.

These changes do not affect individuals who use insulin, women with gestational diabetes or anyone registered with a rare form of diabetes on the NDSS.

Q: Why have the restrictions on blood glucose test strips been introduced?

The 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.

This review found there was 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**. The outcomes of the Review are available at <http://www.pbs.gov.au/info/reviews/diabetes>

Q. How do I access more blood glucose test strips after six months?

A person with **type 2 diabetes who is not using insulin** will need a Blood Glucose Test Strip Six Month Approval Form from their doctor or authorised health professional for subsidised blood glucose test strips after the initial six months.

Only some people with type 2 diabetes who are not using insulin will have a clinical need to self-monitor their blood glucose levels at home. Your doctor or authorised health professional will discuss your individual needs with you.

Q. Is there a form that my doctor or authorised health professional needs to fill out for me to access blood glucose test strips?

Yes. There is a Blood Glucose Test Strip Six Month Approval Form to authorise additional access to blood glucose test strips.

This form is available from the NDSS website at <https://www.ndss.com.au/forms>

You will need to take this completed form to the community pharmacy before additional subsidised products can be provided to you.

Q. From when does the initial six month limit commence?

The initial six month supply of subsidised test strips starts from the first time you buy products on or after 1 July 2016. An access form is not required for this initial access period. For example, if you buy blood glucose test strips in May 2016 and then again in August 2016, the six month supply limit will be from the date of your August supply as this was after 1 July 2016.

Q. I have been testing my blood glucose levels regularly for twenty years. I don't test every day, but test when I need to because things are changing. Will I still be able to access these products?

If you have a clinical need identified by a doctor or other authorised health professional, you will continue to have access to subsidised blood glucose test strips.

Some of the reasons your health professional may authorise additional access to test strips includes if you are taking certain medications or having other health conditions which affect blood glucose levels, and where there is a change in your diabetes management. If any of these situations apply to you, speak with your doctor or authorised health professional about your needs.

Q. Who can I see to get approval for additional blood glucose test strips? Does it have to be a GP?

If you are registered on the NDSS you can automatically access an initial six month supply of blood glucose test strips on or after 1 July 2016 and you will not need an access form for this supply.

After this six month period, a doctor, nurse practitioner or credentialed diabetes educator will determine if you need to continue to use subsidised blood glucose test strips under the NDSS.

Q. I have type 1 diabetes. Can I still access subsidised blood glucose test strips?

Yes. Access to blood glucose test strips has not changed for

- people with type 1 diabetes,
- people with type 2 diabetes who are using insulin,
- women with gestational diabetes and
- people registered with a rare type of diabetes on the NDSS. They will continue to have unrestricted access to test strips under the NDSS.

Q. I can't afford to buy my own blood glucose test strips. How will I access them?

If your doctor or authorised health professional thinks you need to use them, they will continue to be subsidised under the NDSS.

Q. Blood glucose test strips were removed from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme from 1 July 2016? What does this mean?

All blood glucose test strips were removed from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 July 2016.

Blood glucose test strips remain available through the NDSS, and people with diabetes have continued access through the NDSS. The types of blood glucose test strips available under the NDSS are the same as those previously available under the PBS.

Q. Will Indigenous Australians accessing blood glucose test strips under the Closing the Gap arrangements and through Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services continue to have access to blood glucose test strips?

Yes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were eligible for a lower co-payment, or no co-payment, under the *Closing the Gap* arrangements will continue to receive similar subsidisation under the NDSS.

NDSS products, including blood glucose test strips, will continue to be provided to Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services and remote clinics.

Insulin pump consumables

Q. Are insulin pump consumables available from community pharmacy Access Points?

Yes. Insulin pump consumables are available at the NDSS community pharmacy Access Point of a person's choice. Where the pharmacy does not have the IPC in stock, it can be supplied to the pharmacy, usually within 24-72 hours.

As part of the changes, pharmacies have received access to information and education on how to supply IPC.

If you have a questions about an IPC you are still able to talk with experienced staff from Diabetes Australia on the phone (1300 136 588). The NDSS information line continues and operators can provide assistance.

Q. How do I know the pharmacy will stock the IPC items I require?

If the pharmacy does not have a particular item in stock they will be able to order it, and have it delivered, usually within 24-72 hours.

It is a good idea to speak with your pharmacy about your ordering requirements, and if you live a long distance from the pharmacy consider setting up a process for managing your orders, for example, calling in advance and determining a collection date.

Q. Will the co-payment amount for diabetes products change?

No. There are no changes to the co-payment or range of NDSS products. NDSS products will continue to be subsidised by the Government.

Some pharmacies may have a policy for IPC order co-payments to be paid at the time of placing the order.