



Health Care Assistance Fund (HCAF)

Factsheet – HCAF support categories

Australian Thalidomide Survivors Support Program

The information provided in this factsheet is for thalidomide survivors registered with the Australian Thalidomide Survivors Support Program (the Program)

This factsheet provides information about the goods and/or services you can receive support for under the Health Care Assistant Fund (HCAF).

About the Program

The Program is an Australian Government program aimed at providing financial support to Australian thalidomide survivors. The Program includes a HCAF and an Extraordinary Assistance Fund (EAF) which provides health, medical and daily living support to eligible Australian thalidomide survivors.

What is the Health Care Assistance Fund (HCAF)?

The HCAF is intended to cover the out-of-pocket health care expenses incurred in Australia that are likely associated with thalidomide-related injuries. This may include:

- health products and consumables;
- out-of-pocket pharmaceutical costs;
- out-of-pocket health service costs, including medical, surgical and allied health; and
- health-related travel and transport costs.

The HCAF is intended to cover out-of-pocket health care expenses, including those which are not covered, or are only partially covered, by Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and/or any other relevant Australian, state or territory government schemes; or private health insurance.

For information about the support available to help cover the costs of goods and/or services to assist with activities of daily living, please refer to [Factsheet - Making a claim to the EAF](#) and [Factsheet – EAF support categories](#).

What goods and/or services can I claim under the HCAF?

The table following outlines examples of eligible and ineligible items under the HCAF. Claims for goods and services that align with the intent and scope of the relevant fund, but are not specifically listed, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Consideration should be given to return/refund policies and procedures, especially if purchasing custom-made products

Further information about how to make a claim under the HCAF is available in the [Factsheet - Making a claim to the HCAF](#).



Table 1. HCAF support categories

| HCAF Category | ELIGIBLE goods and/or services* - examples |
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| Health Products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health-related consumables, such as incontinence products, enteral feeding products • Ventilators • Aspirators • Cough assist machine • Compression garments • Custom prostheses and artificial limbs • Custom orthoses • Cooling / heating vests |
| Pharmaceuticals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmaceuticals not covered, or partially covered, by the PBS • Medications / Pharmaceuticals by prescription |
| Health Services – Allied Health (Provided by a registered health care practitioner or qualified health care professional – i.e. an individual who is qualified by education, training, or licensure/regulation, when applicable, who performs a professional service within his/her scope of practice.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chiropractic • Exercise physiology • Podiatry • Occupational therapy • Dietetics • Speech therapy • Audiology • Physiotherapy • Massage therapy • Psychology • Counselling • Optometry • Fitness classes, such as pilates, yoga or aquarobics, delivered by an appropriately qualified allied health care professional |
| Health Services – Medical (Provided by a registered health care practitioner) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services covered by Medicare (out of pocket component) • Surgery, including mastectomy • Pathology • Psychiatric • Consultation • Hospital costs not covered by public patient arrangements or private insurance |
| Health Services – Dental (Provided by a registered health care practitioner) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex and major dental |



| HCAF Category | ELIGIBLE goods and/or services* - examples |
|--|--|
| Travel and accommodation costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable travel and accommodation costs associated with attending or accessing health services |
| Complementary / alternative medicines, therapies and treatments (Refer to EAF and HCAF - Program Guidelines, Part 6. Additional claiming guidance for complex services) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complementary / alternative medicines, therapies and treatments may be considered if they are provided or prescribed by a registered health care practitioner or a qualified health care professional. |

* Any associated delivery, set up, training, repairs and/or maintenance costs would also be covered.

| HCAF INELIGIBLE goods and services - examples |
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| Any service, product, procedure or activity that is required, but not as a result of thalidomide-related injuries. |
| Support already received through Medicare, the PBS and/or any other relevant Australian, state or territory government schemes; or private health. |
| Non-prescribed pharmaceutical and medications - for example; cosmetic products and supplements. |
| Medicines, therapies or treatments not provided or prescribed by a registered health care practitioner or a qualified health care professional. |
| Routine dental check-ups and eye examinations. |
| Out of pocket costs associated with the use of private health insurance – for example, premiums and excess costs. |
| Any service, product, procedure or activity that is required, but not as a result of thalidomide-related injuries. |
| Any goods and/or services supplied or received outside Australia. |



HCAF – Further information

The Extraordinary Assistance Fund (EAF) and Health Care Assistance Fund (HCAF) - Program Guidelines provide further information about:

- eligibility to the HCAF;
- making a claim under the HCAF;
- the requirements for pre-approval of an HCAF claim;
- supporting documentation; and
- the goods and/or services eligible to be claimed under the HCAF, including guidance for complex claims (such as private health care costs, and support for travel and accommodation).

How can I get more information?

Thalidomide Support Service

For queries about the HCAF or the EAF, including eligible support categories, or general queries concerning the Program, you can contact the Thalidomide Support Service by calling 1800 643 787 or via email at thalidomide.support@benevolent.org.au.

For further information about the Thalidomide Support Service, please visit the Thalidomide Support Service website at: www.benevolent.org.au/thalidomidesupportservice.

Services Australia

Information about the HCAF and the EAF, including how to make a claim, can also be found on the Services Australia website at www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/thalidomide.

Alternatively, for more information, you can call Services Australia on 1800 565 863 or email at thalidomide.claims@servicesaustralia.gov.au.

Australian Thalidomide Survivors Support Program

General information about the Program can be found on the Department of Health and Aged Care website at www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/australian-thalidomide-survivors-support-program.