

# What you need to know about Wigs and hairpiece service payments

## What is the wigs and hairpieces service payment?

It is a payment to people who suffer from serious hair loss because of a medical condition or from certain cancer therapies. The payments are to reduce the cost of purchasing and maintaining a wig or hairpiece or other related products. The Ministry of Health will pay these service payments to either the claimant or the supplier of the product.

## Who can claim this service payment?

You may claim for this service payment if you:

- > are a New Zealand citizen, or are ordinarily resident in New Zealand; and
- > have a medical condition that has caused you to lose your hair (like treatment for cancer, alopecia or other scalp conditions that cause hair loss).

Your specialist or general practitioner (GP) needs to give you a current medical certificate with your NHI number, details of the hair loss condition and whether it is permanent or temporary.

## What can I use the service payment for?

The service payment is available to cover the cost of the following items only:

- > wig or hairpiece
- > head wear (hats, turbans etc)
- > eyebrow wigs and associated products (eg, adhesive and adhesive remover).

## How much can I claim?

If you are an adult (18 years or over), the amount you are entitled to depends on whether your hair loss is permanent or temporary. If you are under 18, your entitlement is the same whether the hair loss is temporary or permanent.

### For adults (with permanent hair loss)

Your entitlement is \$2330.67 (GST incl) over a nine-year period. You can claim all of or part of your \$2330.67 entitlement at any time over the nine-year entitlement period.

### For adults (with temporary hair loss)

Your entitlement is \$408.89 (GST incl) over a one-year period.

### For children (with temporary or permanent hair loss)

If you are under 18 your entitlement is \$1226.67 (GST incl) over a three-year period or until you turn 18, if that happens first. You can claim all or part of your \$1226.67 entitlement at any time over the entitlement period.

If you are 18 or over and your growth has been affected by cancer or cancer interventions you may still be entitled to \$1226.67 over a three-year period. To apply for this entitlement you need to contact the Ministry of Health and provide supporting medical information.

Requests for this entitlement should be sent to:

Disability Services Directorate, Ministry of Health, PO Box 5013, Wellington 6145.

## What if my hair grows back for a while and then I lose it again?

If you lose your hair again and it is still considered temporary hair loss, your second claim is treated in the same way as your first claim. You will be eligible for an entitlement of \$408.89 for a one-year period from the date you make your first purchase after losing your hair again.

## How do I claim?

Your GP or medical specialist will inform you about the service payment and issue you with a medical certificate. All you will then need to do is go to a wig supplier and choose the right wig or hairpiece for you.

Once you have chosen your wig, hairpiece or other item you may either request the supplier to make a claim to the Ministry of Health on your behalf or make a claim yourself.

## Claim by supplier

The supplier will fill in details of the product and its cost on the Wig and Hairpiece Claim Form and then ask you to fill in your personal details, and sign the form. The supplier will then complete an additional form (stating that they are claiming on your behalf) and forward both forms to the Ministry of Health, with your medical certificate (where this is your first claim). You do not pay for the product yourself but keep a copy of the receipt the supplier gives you for your personal records.

## Claim by you

You pay for the product yourself. To make a claim for reimbursement you must first have a Ministry of Health payee number.

Ring the Ministry of Health on 0800 855 066 for a Payee Number Application Form and a Wig and Hairpiece Claim Form. You will need to complete the forms and return them to the Ministry of Health for reimbursement of your costs.

## Remember

The Ministry of Health will not pay any claims unless they receive the following three items:

- > completed Wig and Hairpiece Claim Form
- > proof of purchase (receipt) issued by the supplier
- > current Medical Certificate for initial claims

## What if the wig or hairpiece that I choose costs more than I am entitled to?

Where an item is purchased that is more than your entitlement balance you are responsible for the additional cost.

For example, if you have temporary hair loss and the wig or hairpiece you have chosen for your first purchase costs \$495, the final cost to you will be \$86.11. You or the supplier can claim the remaining \$408.89 from the Ministry of Health.

## What happens when my entitlement period ends?

At the end of your entitlement period any unspent amount is cancelled. If the Ministry is satisfied that your hair loss is permanent, an entitlement of \$2330.67 (GST incl) will be credited, for a nine-year period. In other cases you must apply to the Ministry of Health for another entitlement. To do this you must send in a new medical certificate that verifies that your hair loss is either temporary or permanent. A new entitlement balance will then be credited.

Use the following table to help you track when and how you have used your Wigs and Hairpiece Service Payment entitlement:

Date product purchased	Amount Claimed	Amount Remaining

For further information, please call the Ministry of Health contact centre on

**0800 855 066**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
8.00 am–5.00 pm

Wednesday  
9.30 am–5.00 pm