

The National Travel Assistance Scheme

Your guide for claiming travel assistance

The National Travel Assistance Scheme may help pay for some travel costs when you are referred to a specialist.

If your specialist refers you to see a specialist at a different location, you may be eligible for travel assistance. Both specialists must be working at a publicly funded hospital or another publicly funded health care facility. You may also get some travel assistance if you have to see your specialist again.

What does travel assistance mean for me?

When your publicly funded specialist (not a GP) has referred you onto another publicly funded specialist, you may be eligible to receive travel assistance.

If eligible, you will get financial help towards your travel and possibly your accommodation costs. Your specialist will need to approve your accommodation and specialised transport needs. This includes taxi, mobility taxi, or air travel.

Travel by private vehicle or public transport is assessed when you register for assistance.

Can I claim for travel costs?

If you can answer 'yes' to one or more of the following questions and you have been referred by your specialist, you are eligible to claim travel assistance.

Children

A child is anyone younger than 18 years of age at the time of treatment.

- Do you travel more than 80 km one way, per visit?
- Do you visit a specialist 22 or more times in two months?
- Do you visit a specialist six or more times in six months, and travel more than 25 km one way, per visit?
- Are you a Community Services Card holder and travel more than 25 km one way, per visit?

Adults

- Do you travel more than 350 km one way, per visit?
- Do you visit a specialist 22 or more times in two months?
- Do you visit a specialist six or more times in six months, and travel more than 50 km one way, per visit?
- Are you a Community Services Card holder and travel more than 80 km one way, per visit?

Please note

- If you receive, or are eligible for, travel assistance from another provider such as ACC, Work and Income, Ministry of Transport or Ministry of Education, you may not be eligible for assistance under the National Travel Assistance Scheme.
- When claiming for either:
 - 22 or more visits to a specialist in two months OR
 - six or more visits to a specialist in six months, and travel more than 25 km one way (child), 50 km one way (adult), per visit

please wait until you have made the minimum number of visits required before submitting your first claim.

Can I claim for accommodation?

If you are eligible and your accommodation is approved by your specialist, you can claim for some assistance, for example, payment towards costs of a motel room, or an allowance when staying with friends and family. Accommodation is not usually approved for travel that is less than 100 km one way.

You can ask either your district health board travel coordinator or hospital social worker about preferred accommodation providers, or make your own accommodation arrangements.

Can I claim for the costs of a support person?

Sometimes you may be eligible for assistance towards a support person's costs, for example, if your specialist recommends that a support person helps you with clinical decision-making, or provides physical support.

A child who is eligible for travel and accommodation assistance will always be eligible for assistance towards a support person's costs.

How do I claim?

1. Your hospital travel coordinator, specialist or social worker will help you register for travel assistance. They send the completed registration form to the Ministry of Health.
2. The Ministry of Health will assess and approve your registration for eligibility.
3. A confirmation letter, along with blank claim forms, will be sent to your usual mailing address.
4. Make sure your claim form is signed and stamped by the attending facility or hospital or attach signed and stamped proof of attendance, for example, a hospital letterhead appointment discharge card, letter or note.
5. Attach original, itemised receipts for public transport and/or accommodation to your claim form.
6. If this is your first claim, or your bank account details have changed, please attach a printed deposit slip or the top of your bank statement or an account verification from your bank.
7. When you register, mileage is calculated from your home address to the facility or hospital where you are being treated via the shortest practical route.
8. You can only claim for appointments attended in the last 12 months from the date the claim is received by the Ministry of Health.

All information you provide will be held securely by the Ministry of Health and will be kept confidential except as may be required to disclose by law. You will have the right to access your own information and can request that it be corrected any time.

The National Travel Assistance Scheme is funded according to the National Travel Assistance Policy. It is available from: www.health.govt.nz

Where information in this brochure or advice provided by the Ministry of Health differs from the National Travel Assistance Policy document, then in all cases the National Travel Assistance Policy document takes precedence.

For more information about claiming travel assistance please contact:

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National Travel Assistance
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Wellington

0800 855 066