



Australian Government  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



COMMUNITY  
NURSING

# Department of Veterans' Affairs Community Nursing services



a guide for veterans,  
family members  
and carers



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# DVA's Community Nursing services

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Community Nursing services help you receive care in the comfort of your own home. This includes health care and personal care services to meet your clinical needs.



## Nursing services

are provided by nursing staff and can include ...

Caring for wounds

Helping with medication

Helping to manage symptoms of medical conditions

Helping with end of life and palliative care

Checking overall health

Helping after an operation or a stay in hospital

Helping with day-to-day activities, like showering, going to the toilet and dressing

Helping with other tasks if there is a clinical need

# **Who can receive these services?**

All veterans, war widows and widowers with a Gold Card can use DVA-funded Community Nursing services. Some White Card holders may also be eligible for DVA-funded Community Nursing services if they meet the criteria.

If you think you could benefit from Community Nursing services, you can contact:

- your local doctor
- a nurse practitioner in community services
- a doctor in a hospital where you are receiving treatment
- the person who will be managing your discharge from hospital
- a Veterans' Home Care Assessment Agency.

They will organise a referral to a registered DVA Community Nursing provider, who will then assess your care needs.

# **How much does it cost?**

If you are eligible to receive Community Nursing services, they are free for you.

## **Providers**

DVA keeps a list of approved Community Nursing providers who can give you the care you need.

The providers have nursing staff who come to your home to care for you.

You can choose your own provider, with help from the person making the referral. You can find the list of approved providers in your state or territory on the DVA website ([www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)), or call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372).



# Your nursing care plan

Your Community Nursing provider will work with you, and your family member or carer if needed, to create a nursing care plan.

This nursing care plan will detail the type of care you receive, such as:

Nursing care activities. The nurse who does the assessment will identify these activities with you

Your goals and desired outcomes of care

Agreed days and approximate times that care will be provided to you

You will be asked to sign a copy of your nursing care plan to show that you agree with it. You will be able to keep a copy for yourself. If you cannot sign it, your family member or carer can sign for you.

Over time your care needs may change. A nurse will review your nursing care plan regularly, and update it if needed.

# Aged care assessment

If you have not already had an aged care assessment, you are encouraged to have one. This will help to identify any other government-funded services you may be eligible to receive, in addition to DVA Community Nursing.

You can apply for an aged care assessment online at [www.myagedcare.gov.au/assessment/how-apply-assessment](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/assessment/how-apply-assessment) or by calling My Aged Care on 1800 200 422. A family member, friend, carer or advocate can help you with your application if you wish.

There is more information about other health services you may be eligible for on page 19 of this booklet.

# **Changing providers**

You can choose which DVA Community Nursing provider delivers your community nursing services. If you want to change Community Nursing providers, you will need a referral from your regular doctor to a new provider.

Your doctor will support you to find a new provider in your local area, and can make a referral directly to this new provider.

Once you have confirmed your start date with your new Community Nursing provider, you will need to let your current provider know that you are changing providers and the date this will happen.

# Giving feedback

If you have feedback about your provider or the services you are receiving, always talk to your provider first. This includes if you have any concerns about the services you are receiving or if you want to make a complaint. Your Community Nursing provider should have a feedback/complaints policy. If you do not have a copy of this policy, ask your provider for a copy.

If you have a complaint, we recommend that you talk to your provider in the first instance.

If you're still not happy, you can talk to DVA:

**Call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)**

Send feedback on the DVA website by going to the feedback page on [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)

Send a letter to:

Manager, Feedback Management Team  
GPO Box 9998  
Brisbane QLD 4001

You can also talk to the health care complaints body in your state or territory.

The health care complaints body in your state or territory can be contacted on the phone number listed below:

NSW – Health Care Complaints Commission  
**1800 043 159**

Queensland – Office of the Health Ombudsman  
**133 646**

ACT – ACT Human Rights Commission **02 6205 2222**

Victoria – Health Complaints Commissioner  
**1300 582 113**

SA – Health and Community Services  
Complaints Commissioner **1800 232 007**

NT – Health and Community Services  
Complaints Commission **1800 004 474** (NT) or  
**08 8999 1969** (rest of Australia)

WA – Health and Disability Services Complaints  
Office **1800 813 583** (WA) or **08 6551 7600**  
(rest of Australia)

Tasmania – Health Complaints Commissioner  
**1800 001 170**

These organisations are open business hours,  
Monday to Friday.

# **Rights and responsibilities**

If you are receiving Community Nursing services, both you and your provider have rights and responsibilities.

## **Your provider must ...**

Treat you with dignity and respect

Let you have a say in the type of care you need

Make sure your care is safe and right for you

Give you the help you need

Make you feel safe and comfortable when nursing staff visit you

Listen to any problems you have, and help you make a complaint if you need to

Provide nursing staff who are caring and competent

Make you feel confident that your provider is competent

## You need to ...

Make your home safe for the nursing staff caring for you

Treat the nursing staff with respect

Know that your health could change. Let the nursing staff know about any changes to your health

Be responsible for your actions and choices

Give enough information about yourself so the nursing staff know how to care for you

Cancel any planned visit from the nursing staff well ahead of time

Let the provider know if you have any problems or concerns

Let your current provider know if you are changing providers. Give them a date when you won't need their services anymore

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights lists rights and responsibilities for everyone receiving health care in Australia.

You can find more information about rights and responsibilities from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care at [www.safetyandquality.gov.au/australian-charter-healthcare-rights](http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/australian-charter-healthcare-rights), or call 02 9126 3600.



# Getting help from an advocate

If you think you need help or someone to represent you, you can use an advocate. An advocate is someone who makes sure you are being looked after. This might include helping you to understand your rights and responsibilities, assisting you to make a complaint or speaking on your behalf when you don't feel you can speak for yourself.

An advocate can be a family member, friend or carer. If you don't know someone like this who can help you, you can use an advocacy service.



An advocacy service will provide someone to help you. If you need an advocacy service, contact the:

- Accredited Advocate Register ([www.advocateregister.org.au/index.php](http://www.advocateregister.org.au/index.php)), which lists advocates who work for Ex-Service Organisations
- National Aged Care Advocacy Line: **1800 700 600**, which is a part of the Older Persons Advocacy Network [opan.com.au](http://opan.com.au).

## Elder abuse

Elder abuse takes many forms, and is not always physical. Elder abuse may be physical, financial, emotional or psychological, sexual, or neglect. You can find more information about elder abuse from the Compass website at [www.compass.info](http://www.compass.info).

If you have concerns about elder abuse, you can contact 1800 353 375 and you will be directed to the relevant organisation in your state or territory. You may also contact the relevant organisation directly using the contact details on the next page.

NSW – Ageing & Disability Commission

**1800 628 221**

Queensland – Queensland Government  
Elder Abuse Helpline **1300 651 192** (QLD) or  
**07 3867 2525**

ACT – Older Persons ACT Legal Service (OPALS)  
**02 6243 3436**

Victoria – Seniors Rights Victoria **1300 368 821**

SA – SA Health **1800 372 310**

NT – COTA NT **1800 037 072**

WA – Department of Communities **1300 724 679**

Tasmania – Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline  
**1800 441 169**

These organisations are open business hours,  
Monday to Friday.

**In an emergency, phone 000 for help.**

# **Other services you may be eligible to receive**

DVA and other government departments provide other services you may be eligible to receive. The following list is a guide only, and may not include all available services.

**DVA services** – more information about these services, including eligibility, is available on the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au) or call 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372):

- Veterans' Home Care (VHC) **1300 550 450**
- Respite Care and Carer Support
- Attendant Care
- Household Services
- Rehabilitation Appliances Program
- Veterans' MATES
- Open Arms **1800 011 046**.

**Department of Health** – more information about these services is available at [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au), or call the My Aged Care contact centre on 1800 200 422:

- Commonwealth Home Support Programme
- Home Care Packages Program.

# Contact DVA

If you need any more information:

Free phone call: **1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)**

Email: [generalenquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:generalenquiries@dva.gov.au)

Website: [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)



## **Disclaimer**

The information in this booklet is provided as general information only and is based on the information available on the date of publication. The information will be amended periodically as circumstances, policies or procedures change. It is therefore important to check from time to time to make sure that you have the current version. The latest version will be available on the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) website with the date of amendment noted.

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