



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For Community Pharmacy Access Points

### Changes to the NDSS

#### **Q. What are the changes to the NDSS from 1 July 2016?**

NDSS products are now only available through community pharmacies that are NDSS Access Points. These products will be supplied through the pharmaceutical wholesaler distribution network, the same network that supplies PBS medicines, at no cost to the pharmacy.

Access Points are eligible to receive a payment of \$1.00 for each NDSS product supplied from 1 July 2016.

These products include blood glucose test strips, urine test strips, needles, syringes and insulin pump consumables (IPCs).

In addition, restrictions to accessing blood glucose test strips on the NDSS for registrants with type 2 diabetes who are not using insulin came into effect on 1 July 2016.

### Advice

#### **Q. Why have the supply changes happened?**

The changes provide more efficient distribution of NDSS products, as they are now supplied through the existing PBS medicine supply network.

#### **Q. What is the role of Diabetes Australia in administering the NDSS?**

The new NDSS Agreement with Diabetes Australia came into effect on 1 July 2016. Diabetes Australia continues to assist in the administration of the NDSS, and there are no changes to the support and education services provided by Diabetes Australia.

Diabetes Australia continues to register people with diabetes to the Scheme, provide education and support for registrants and Access Points, maintain the NDSS database and systems, and manage payments to Access Points and the collection of NDSS Registrant co-payments.

#### **Q. Will registrants still be able to access the NDSS telephone service?**

Yes. Access to the NDSS Helpline 1300 136 588 has not changed. Registrants and pharmacy staff can still get advice about diabetes products over the phone through Diabetes Australia. However, registrants can no longer order NDSS products over the phone, through Diabetes Australia shops or Diabetes Australia agent websites.

**Q. Do Access Points require a new Access Point Agreement from 1 July 2016?**

New Access Point Agreements are currently being established between the Commonwealth and individual Access Points, and will be managed by Diabetes Australia. Extensions of previous agreements have been put in place while new arrangements are being finalised.

**Q. How does my pharmacy become an NDSS Access Point?**

To enquire about becoming an NDSS Access Point, contact the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588 in the first instance. However, new pharmacy Access Point applications will not be progressed until finalisation of the New Access Point Agreement.

**Q. Has the price of NDSS products changed?**

There are no changes to price or range of NDSS products, or the co-payment a registrant pays for products. If home delivery is required, Access Points may choose to charge delivery costs.

## **Ordering**

**Q. Are registrants able to order NDSS diabetes products online?**

No. Registrants are no longer able to order NDSS products online or over the phone from Diabetes Australia, and state and territory diabetes organisations. Registrants will need to order and collect products from their local NDSS community pharmacy Access Point.

If a registrant lives a long distance from the pharmacy it may be useful to discuss setting up regular ordering of their products so that they are available when they next visit the pharmacy.

Some registrants will request less common NDSS items which you may not routinely stock. In these instances, it is best to discuss the person's requirements and discuss options for ensuring stock availability based on their needs.

Similarly, some registrants may wish to purchase larger quantities of NDSS products (for example to meet their higher than normal monthly needs) and these needs should be discussed to ensure that sufficient quantities are available from the pharmacy.

While registrants can order larger quantities as required, there are limits to the number of products that may be purchased through the NDSS in a 180 day period. These limits are:

- 900 strips and/or
- 1200 sharps or
- 90 cannulae and/or
- 90 reservoirs/cartridges

## Blood Glucose Test Strips

**Q: What are the new restrictions for accessing blood glucose test strips (BGTS)?**

**Note: These restrictions do not apply to NDSS registrants who use insulin, have gestational diabetes, or have a rare form of diabetes.**

Since 1 July 2016, all registrants with **type 2 diabetes not using insulin** are eligible for an initial six month supply of subsidised blood glucose test strips. This means that they can purchase blood glucose test strips, as required, over a six month period. This change follows the independent advice of the expert Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

The six month access period commences from the date that blood glucose test strips are first purchased on or after 1 July 2016. The *NDSS Connect* software will automatically calculate this period. After six months, the NDSS system will prompt that the registrant is no longer eligible to receive subsidised test strips, and these registrants should be directed to speak to their health professional.

Importantly, if a person needs access to subsidised blood glucose test strips for clinical reasons, they will continue to receive access after the required form is completed and signed by an authorised health professional.

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

A review of products used in the management of diabetes found that there is 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**. As a result, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommended more targeted access to test strips for people with type 2 diabetes to ensure that patients are using the most appropriate products. The outcomes of the Review are available on the [PBS website](#).

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

Registrants who have a clinical need for blood glucose test strips will need a signed form from a medical doctor, credentialed diabetes educator or nurse practitioner for subsidised blood glucose test strips after the initial six months. Ideally this extension to access should be sought before the six month period expires.

Ongoing access is based on the clinical judgement of the health professional as to whether the patient benefits from additional monitoring, for example

- The person is taking a medicine which may adversely affect glycaemic control i.e. sulfonylureas;
- The person has an illness in addition to diabetes that may adversely affect glycaemic control;
- The person's diabetes is inadequately controlled;
- There is a clinical need for the person to self-monitor their blood glucose level; or
- There has been a change to the person's existing diabetes management within the previous three (3) months.

There is no limit on the number of six month extensions to access that can be authorised.

**Q. Who are the authorised health professionals that can approve additional access to blood glucose test strips?**

Authorised health professionals include medical practitioners, nurse practitioners and credentialed diabetes educators.

**Q. Is there a form a medical doctor or authorised health professional needs to fill out for people to access blood glucose test strips?**

Yes. A completed and signed Blood Glucose Test Strip Six Month Approval Form from a doctor or authorised health professional is required for subsidised blood glucose test strips after the initial six months. The form is available from the NDSS website at <https://www.ndss.com.au/forms>

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

**Q: What do pharmacy staff do with the authorisation form?**

If a registrant is granted an additional six months access, they will need to bring the completed authorisation form to the pharmacy. Pharmacy staff will need to check that the form is completed and signed and update the relevant details on NDSS Connect following the prompts. The system will automatically calculate the new six month period based on these details. It is important to note that extended access cannot be provided retrospectively and six month access periods are continuous and cannot be accessed in segments.

**Q: How is the access period worked out?**

The new six month access period starts on the day that the form was signed or the next day following the previous expiry period, whichever is later.

**Example A**

Mr Smith has an approval form signed 31 March 2017. His current access period will expire 1 July 2017. His new six month approval period will commence from 2 July 2017.

**Example B**

Ms Jones has an approval signed on 31 March 2017. Her previous access period ended on 1 January 2017. Her new six month approval period will commence from 31 March 2017.

**Example C**

Mr Shaw is part-way through a six-month access period ending 1 May 2017 and obtains a form for further approval for access, signed on 1 January 2017. Mr Shaw does not use his approval for further access until 1 November 2017. His new approved access period would have already expired on the 31 October 2017 (1 May 2017 + 6 months), hence he will not be able to access BGTS. He would need to revisit his doctor to obtain a new authorised approval form if he wishes to obtain access.

**Q: How do I know if a non-insulin requiring type 2 registrant has reached their six month limit?**

NDSS Connect shows when an existing approval will expire on entering an NDSS Registration number and will prompt Access Point staff if a "Blood Glucose Test Strip Approval" is required.

**Q. Can people with other types of diabetes still access blood glucose test strips?**

Yes. Access to blood glucose test strips has not changed for people with type 1 diabetes, type 2 insulin-dependent diabetes, gestational diabetes or those registered on the NDSS with a rare form of diabetes. These groups continue to receive subsidised test strips under the NDSS, as they did before 1 July 2016.

**Q. Are blood glucose test strips still listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)?**

No. Blood glucose test strips were delisted from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Subsidised blood glucose test strips remain available through the NDSS and people with diabetes have continued access through the NDSS.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 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, continue to be provided to Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services and remote clinics.

## Insulin pumps

### **Q. Do Access Points need to stock all Insulin Pump Consumable (IPC) products?**

No. Access Points are not required to stock IPCs, as they may be ordered as required and delivered generally within 24 hours – at no cost to the pharmacy. IPC users have been advised that Access Points may need to order IPCs on demand.

### **Q. How are IPCs ordered?**

IPCs will be ordered on demand via *NDSS Connect* for delivery generally within 24 hours. Access Points will be able to see a registrant's IPC supply history to assist in ordering the correct product.

### **Q. Will pharmacy staff receive training?**

As part of the changes, pharmacy staff have received information and education regarding IPCs which is available through the NDSS portal or by contacting Diabetes Australia on 1300 36 588.

It is not expected that pharmacy staff will provide clinical advice to users regarding these products, they are only responsible for the supply of IPCs. People can still talk to Diabetes Australia with experienced staff on the phone (1300 136 588) about IPCs. The NDSS information line continues and operators can provide assistance.

## Access Point Ordering Processes

### General

### **Q. Are there changes in how the Access Points order NDSS products?**

Access Points continue to use *NDSS Connect* for ordering and confirming eligibility for products.

### **Q: What are NDSS Access Point obligations?**

The responsibilities of an Access Point are contained in Section 5 of the NDSS Access Point Guidelines, which are available on the [NDSS website](#).

### Setting up the ordering process

### **Q. What information do I need to set up the ordering process?**

Access Points are required to have a PharmX ID and an account with their preferred CSOD (Community Service Obligation Distributor/pharmacy wholesaler) for NDSS product supply.

Further information is covered in the NDSS Access Point Guidelines.

**Q. How do I know or find out if I have a PharmX ID?**

Contact your pharmacy Point of Sale provider or CSOD to request your PharmX ID.

If you do not have a nominated wholesaler or point of Sale provider, please contact the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588 for assistance.

**Q. Which pharmacy wholesalers can I select as my preferred CSOD?**

An NDSS Access Point can select their preferred CSOD from the pharmacy wholesalers that are nominated and approved by the Commonwealth Department of Health under the Community Service Obligation (CSO).

The current approved national CSODs are API, Sigma and Symbion. National Pharmacies are also an option in SA and Victoria.

**Q. How can I change my preferred CSOD?**

Contact the new CSOD or your pharmacy point of sale provider and notify them that you wish to change your preferred CSOD for the NDSS.

The new CSOD will advise PharmX who will update the system that links the NDSS to your account with the new CSOD.

Contact your NDSS Agent and advise them that you have changed your CSOD.

It is suggested that if you are changing account information that an Access Point holds submission of the Sub Agency Transaction Summary (SATS) until the requested change has been completed. This is the order summary form which accompanies each order.

**Q: Can I select a second CSOD as a backup supplier?**

No. NDSS orders are only able to be directed to one CSOD.

**Q: What Products do I need to supply?**

Access Points are expected to provide the full range of listed NDSS Products to registrant's on request. This includes syringes and needles, blood glucose test strips, urine test strips and insulin pump consumables (IPCs).

**Q: How much stock do I need to keep?**

There is no minimum stock level that an Access Point is required to keep.

Access Points may contact their NDSS Agent for recommendations about appropriate stock levels for their local area.

**Q: Do I need to maintain a base stock of IPCs?**

No. Access Points are not required to maintain a base stock of IPCs, as they can be ordered as required.

Access Points should work with their regular IPC Registrants to implement reminder and/or early ordering arrangements to ensure continuity of supply. Special consideration should be given as holiday periods approach or if the registrant is planning any travel.

**Q: Where do I find more information about IPCs?**

Information about IPCs is available on the [NDSS website](#).

An e-learning module about IPC's is available on [the Access Point Online Training Portal](#).

The training portal provides login and forgotten password prompts, as well as a sign up function for new members.

If you have any questions about IPCs please contact the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588.

## Ordering

**Q. How do I process an NDSS order?**

Access Points must use NDSS Connect for NDSS registrant orders.

The order will not be sent to the CSOD until the SATS has been submitted.

Detailed instructions are available in Section 4 of the NDSS Connect Access Point Procedures manual.

Please contact the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588 if further assistance is required.

**Q. How often can I process an order?**

Access Points are able to process registrant orders upon request. An Access Point SATS may be submitted at any time for supply from the CSOD.

**Q. How do I manage urgent orders?**

When ordering an item that is not kept in stock (e.g. IPCs), Access Points are reminded to submit SATS on completion of the registrant sale for the supply to occur from the CSOD as soon as possible.

**Q: How can I check which product a registrant uses?**

NDSS Connect will show you a summary of the registrant's product purchase history.



**Q: Does a patient have to pay for their NDSS Products, including IPCs at the time of ordering?**

Access Points should collect the registrant Contribution at the time of processing the registrant's request in NDSS Connect, including orders for items such as IPCs that may not be kept in stock. Once the SATS has been submitted, it is assumed that the product has been supplied to the registrant and the relevant registrant contribution will be deducted as part of the direct debit transaction for the weekly collection of registrant contributions.

**Q: Is there a limit to how much product a patient can purchase?**

Yes. The amount of NDSS products a registrant can purchase in a 6 month period are specified on the [NDSS website](#).

This is monitored and managed by the NDSS as there may be special situations requiring flexibility. Large or unusual order requests should be referred to the NDSS Helpline for assistance.

**Q: Is there a limit to how frequently a registrant can place an order?**

No. A registrant may purchase NDSS Products as required, provided the quantities do not exceed the amounts specified on the [NDSS website](#).

**NDSS Order troubleshooting:**

Access Points should direct enquiries relating to deliveries and stock issues to their CSOD in the first instance.

**Q. How do I know if an order has been placed?**

NDSS Connect will accept the order. Access Points can review submitted SATS order history on NDSS Connect.

**Q. What do I do if I cannot submit an order?**

Contact the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588 for further assistance.

**Q. Can I redirect orders for 'out-of-stock' items to another wholesaler?**

No. The NDSS is only able to supply order products from your nominated CSOD

**Q: Can an Access Point order directly from the CSOD?**

NDSS items must be processed via NDSS Connect in order for the CSOD to deliver the products at no charge to the Access Point.

Orders placed directly with the CSOD (not via NDSS Connect) will be processed by the CSOD as a private order and the Access Point will be charged accordingly.

**Q: What do I do if the CSOD does not resolve an order problem?**

Please contact the NDSS Helpline on 1300 136 588 for further assistance. Your local NDSS Agent who will work with Diabetes Australia in addressing the issue.

NDSS funds

**Q. Why do I have to provide my bank account details?**

From July 2016 all Access Points are required to provide a nominated bank account to Diabetes Australia for the collection of Registrant Contributions and payment of the handling fee to pharmacy Access Points.

All NDSS transactions will occur through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

**Q. What do I need to provide?**

Access Points are requested to provide a completed “Direct Debit Request” form to Diabetes Australia. The form is to be completed and signed by the nominated account holder. These details may be updated at any time, such as change of owner or banking institution.

The form may be downloaded from NDSS Connect or the [NDSS website](#).

Completed forms may be submitted by:

- Fax: 1300 536 953; or
- Email: [apndss@diabetesaustralia.com.au](mailto:apndss@diabetesaustralia.com.au)

**Q. When do debits from my account occur?**

Diabetes Australia will deduct collected Registrant Contributions from your nominated account at the close of business each Wednesday for all completed SATS submitted in the week prior.

**Q How do I reconcile the transaction?**

On completion of the Direct Debit, Diabetes Australia will provide Access Points a statement on Wednesday evening by email detailing the funds collected.

Access Points are reminded that they are able to reprint copies of submitted SATS in NDSS Connect under “Review SATS”.

**Q. Do I receive payment from the NDSS?**

All community pharmacy Access Points are provided a \$1 (ex GST) handling fee for each NDSS product supplied. This payment is made by Diabetes Australia, 1 month in arrears, on behalf of the Government.

Diabetes Australia will provide Access Points an invoice detailing the funds provided by email.