

Purpose

This procedure provides information about the roles and responsibilities of Life Without Barriers (LWB) staff working in Disability and Mental Health (DMH). It describes how we support people to maintain their bowel and bladder health.

Note:

Where a person's bowel support includes

- administration of an enema or suppository
- support with an Ostomy
- manual evacuation
- digital stimulation
- abdominal massage
- support with autonomic dysreflexia (AD).

These must be supported under High-Intensity Daily Personal Activities (HIDPA) procedures and training requirements. To learn more, go to [HIDPA complex bowel care SharePoint page](#)

Where a person's urinary support includes

- indwelling catheter
- suprapubic catheter
- changing of equipment – for example, bags, tubing, etc.
- support with ileostomy or urostomy
- autonomic dysreflexia (AD)

These must be supported under High-Intensity Daily Personal Activities (HIDPA) procedures and training requirements. To learn more, go to the [HIDPA urinary catheter support SharePoint page](#).

Bowel Health

Some people we support can have bowel problems due to certain medical conditions. A lack of physical activity, nerve damage, or muscle weakness can cause these conditions. Examples of such conditions include Down Syndrome, Rett Syndrome, and Cerebral Palsy.

Where a person needs support with any bowel issues, a health practitioner will write a plan so we can support the person safely. This plan will list things like:

- what kind of support do they need?
- how to manage any problems or risks.
- when to call an ambulance.
- when the plan needs to be reviewed or changed.

If a person needs support with their bowel movements but it's not considered a HIDPA condition, a health professional can write down instructions on how staff can support them.

Health professionals can use plans they can find online. If no standard plan is available, the health professional will make a plan just for that person based on what they need. Staff can give the health professional a copy of the [NDIS LWB 5509 Health Plan Essentials – Checklist](#) so they know what we need to be in the plans so we can give the person the right support.

Support with basic personal cleanliness to help people maintain good hygiene will be written in their [NDIS LWB 5531 Personal Care Plan](#).

Check

The Disability Support Worker will:

- read and follow any instructions in bowel care or personal care plans.
- be aware of a person's usual bowel habits.
- watch out for when a person's bowel habits change.
- look out for signs of bowel problems such as:
 - **Constipation.** Straining or pain when trying to pass faeces or not passing faeces regularly.
 - **Diarrhoea.** Having frequent loose, watery bowel movements
 - **Faecal incontinence.** Not able to control bowel movements. A person is having trouble getting to the toilet on time and having repeated incidents resulting in dirty clothes.
- **The Disability Support Leader will:**
 - make sure all people we support with health needs have their bowel health reviewed as part of their Annual Health Assessment.
 - staff understand and know how to follow any health support plans for those they support.

Support

The Disability Support Worker will:

- support people in having bowel health reviewed as part of their annual health assessment.
- be able to recognise when someone is having problems with bowel movements and understand:
 - where there is doubt, seek advice from a health professional.
 - know what to watch out for with existing conditions and notice any new issues that may come up for a person we support.
- know when to call an ambulance / provide emergency response including:
 - vomiting blood or faecal matter.
 - diarrhoea and/or vomiting that happens more often (more than once).
 - bleeding from the bowel or fresh (red) or old (black) blood found in faeces.

- Severe or uncommon pain felt before, during, or after passing a bowel movement.
- use the [CHECK SUPPORT REPORT](#) way to check for health changes to look for in the people they support.
- use the [NDIS LWB 5055 Signs of Changing or Deteriorating Health](#) to know what signs to watch out for any certain person.
- change a person's soiled pads, pants, and underwear as soon as possible to help stop the spread of germs that can cause infection.
- follow a person's [NDIS LWB 5531 Personal Care - Plan](#). This will tell you:
 - How often should we check or change the aids?
 - Their schedule for using the toilet.
 - Any creams or lotions that a health professional has recommended to use and how and when to apply them.
- support people over 50 years old to use the free bowel cancer screening test mailed to their homes every two (2) years.
- track any concerns of bowel problems via the [NDIS LWB 5597 Bowel Diary](#) and provide to a Health Professional for review.

The Disability Support Leader will:

- Make sure a person visits a health professional if they have any new issues or problems linked to existing bowel conditions.
- Make sure a person has any health plans reviewed every year or more often if their needs change.

Report

The Disability Support Worker will:

- Report any concerns or issues related to the person's bowel health immediately to the Disability Support Leader¹ or On Call.
- Complete any checklists, recording charts ([NDIS LWB 5590 Bowel Movement - Recording Chart](#) as needed), daily shift and handover notes, progress notes, updates on the work being done, and i-Sight events before finishing the shift.

The Disability Support Leader will:

- Speak to a CPE Practice Support Leader/Specialist about any health risks and support needs as needed.

¹ All references to Disability Support Leader (DSL), includes all Frontline Leadership roles, such as House Supervisor.

Bladder health

Where a person needs support with any bowel issues, a health practitioner will write a plan so we can support the person safely. This plan will list things like:

- what kind of support do they need?
- how to manage any problems or risks.
- when to call an ambulance.
- when the plan needs to be reviewed or changed.

If a person needs support with their bowel movements but it's not considered a HIDPA condition, a health professional can write down instructions on how staff can support them. Health professionals can use plans they can find online. If no standard plan is available, the health professional will make a plan just for that person based on what they need. Staff can give the health professional a copy of the [NDIS LWB 5509 Health Plan Essentials – Checklist](#) so they know what we need to be in the plans so we can give the person the right support.

Support with basic personal cleanliness to help people maintain good hygiene will be written in their [NDIS LWB 5531 Personal Care Plan](#).

Check

The Disability Support Worker will:

- Make sure you read and follow any instructions in bladder care or personal care plans.
- Be aware of a person's usual bladder habits.
- Make sure you watch out for when a person's bladder habits change.
- Look out for signs of bladder problems such as:
 - **Stress Incontinence.** A leak of urine that can happen with certain physical activity such as coughing, laughing or exercising.
 - **Urge Incontinence.** A leak of urine with an uncontrollable strong need to pass urine, finding it hard to make it to the toilet on time.
 - **Overflow incontinence.** Frequent urinary dribbling, passing small amounts of urine many times during the day and urine that passes slowly throughout the night.
 - **Reflex incontinence.** Leaks happen without a feeling of needing to go to the toilet, and the person has no control over this.
- **The Disability Support Leader will:**
 - Make sure all people we support with health needs have their bladder health reviewed as part of their Annual Health Assessment.
 - Staff understand and know how to follow any health support plans for those they support.

Support

The Disability Support Worker will:

- Support people in having bladder health reviewed as part of their annual health assessment.
- Be able to recognise when someone is having problems with bowel movements and understand:
 - where there is doubt, seek advice from a health professional.
 - Know what to watch out for with existing conditions and notice any new issues that may come up for a person we support.
- Be able to recognise the signs that someone might have a urinary tract infection (UTI), including
 - A strong urge to urinate that doesn't go away.
 - A person is urinating more often and only a few drops.
 - Urine appears cloudy, red, pink or brown.
 - Urine smells very strongly.
- A person may show or tell you that they are feeling:
 - Burning pain or a 'scalding' sensation when urinating.
 - A feeling that the bladder is still full after urinating.
 - Pain in the pelvis around the area of the pubic bone.
 - Pressure or cramping in the lower belly or back.
- UTIs can cause a person to have sudden unexplained changes in their behaviour, such as increased confusion, agitation, or withdrawal.
- If someone has a UTI (urinary tract infection) and does not get treatment, it can worsen quickly. This is because the problem can go into the blood, causing life-threatening problems.
- People with kidney infection can have the same signs as UTI but can also have:
 - Chills
 - Fever
 - Pain in the lower belly, back, side or groin area
 - Nausea and vomiting
- Use the [CHECK SUPPORT REPORT](#) way to check for health changes to look for in the people they support.
- Use the [NDIS LWB 5055 Signs of Changing or Deteriorating Health](#) to know what signs to watch out for any certain person.
- If you are concerned that someone is showing signs of bladder control problems. You can fill in the [Bladder Control Problem Checklist](#) with the person and, where there are answers marked as Yes, provide this to a Health Professional for review.
- Any changes can be tracked using the [NDIS LWB 5596 Bladder Diary](#). Use the [Health Direct Urine Colour Chart](#) to gather information that can help a health professional in their review. Make sure you keep a record daily for at least 3 days and share it with the

person's health professional for review.

- Change a person's soiled pads, pants, and underwear as soon as possible to help stop the spread of germs that can cause a UTI or kidney infection.
- How to support a person using continence aids will be written in their [NDIS LWB 5531 Personal Care - Plan](#). This will tell you:
 - How often should we check or change the aids?
 - Their schedule for using the toilet.
 - Any creams or lotions that a health professional has recommended to use and how and when to apply them.
- Encourage people to drink plenty of liquids, especially water, which helps turn urine pale yellow. When a person urinates more often, it allows for any germs to be flushed away.
- Make sure a person sits down properly on the toilet and takes enough time for their bladder to empty. This includes men if they have trouble emptying their bladder.
- Practice good toilet hygiene, making sure the person wipes from the front to the back after urinating and a bowel movement. This helps to stop the spread of germs from the bottom to the vagina.

The Disability Support Leader will:

- Make sure a person visits a health professional for urgent review if they show signs of UTIs.
- Make sure a person visits a health professional for a Continence Assessment if they have any new issues or problems linked to existing bladder conditions.
 - For Continence Assessment, the health professional may request a copy of recording charts such as the [NDIS LWB 5590 Bowel Movement - Recording Chart](#), [NDIS LWB 5597 Bowel Diary](#) and [NDIS LWB 5596 Bladder Diary](#) for review as part of the assessment.
- Make sure a person has any health plans reviewed every year or more often if their needs change.

Report

The Disability Support Worker will:

- Report any concerns or issues related to the person's bladder health immediately to the Disability Support Leader or On Call.
- Complete any checklists, recording charts, daily shift and handover notes, progress notes, updates on the work being done, and i-Sight events before finishing the shift.

The Disability Support Leader will:

- Speak to a CPE Practice Support Leader/Specialist about any health risks and support needs as needed.

The [Continence Foundation of Australia](#) can provide helpful information on where to get assistance for incontinence.

Many groups provide information and resources on bowel, bladder and continence support. Further resources can be accessed via the links below:

<http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au/>

[Australian Government Department of Health – Managing bladder and bowel problems](#)

<http://www.continence.org.au/>

[Incontinence Foundation – Tips for caring for someone with incontinence](#)