

Disability assistance

A guide about the:
Disability Allowance
Special Disability Allowance
Modification Grant
Child Disability Allowance



Work and Income
Te Hirainga Tangata

A service of the Ministry of Social Development

If you or someone you are caring for has a disability, we may be able to provide extra assistance.

If you wish to apply for any of these types of assistance, it is important that you contact us as soon as possible.

We can grant you financial assistance from the date you first contact us, if you complete your application within 20 working days of that date.

Disability Allowance

The Disability Allowance is for people who have a disability and need help with everyday tasks or ongoing medical care. It helps with things like regular visits to the doctor or hospital, medicines, extra clothing or travel if these arise from your disability.

You can get the Disability Allowance on its own or with a main type of income support (like the Invalid's Benefit). You can apply on behalf of a child if they are aged 18 years or under and financially dependent on you.

To qualify, you must:

- be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, who normally lives here *and*
- have a disability that is likely to last at least 6 months *and*
- need ongoing help or ongoing medical care.

If you're on a benefit you'll usually qualify for a Disability Allowance.

If you're not on a benefit, or are getting New Zealand Superannuation or the Veteran's Pension, your and your partner's income must be under a certain limit as shown in the following table:

If you are ...	Your weekly income before tax must be under
Single aged 16-17 years with no children	\$470.03
Single aged 18 years or over with no dependent children	\$544.02
Married, civil union or de facto couple with or without children	\$791.53
Sole parent with 1 dependent child	\$655.54
Any other sole parent	\$690.65

Rates at 1 April 2009

The maximum Disability Allowance is \$55.88 a week (as at 1 April 2009), usually paid straight into your bank account with your main benefit (or weekly if you don't get any other assistance). The amount you get depends on the extra costs you have because of your disability. The Disability Allowance is not taxed.

The Disability Allowance can help pay for a number of things – as long as your doctor tells us you need them because of your disability. Over the page are some of the things we may be able to help with, and the sorts of proof we need to see – so keep all your receipts.

Here are some of the extra costs we may be able to help with ...	We'll need to see ...
Doctor's, specialist's and hospital fees that are not already subsidised	Receipts or invoices showing the date, cost and reason for your visit
Prescription fees	Receipts or print-outs from your chemist showing the date, cost, the item you received and whether it's subsidised
Travel to your doctor, specialist, hospital or counsellor	Tickets or receipts showing the date, cost and how you travelled (if you travelled in your own car, we need to know the cc rating of your car and how far you travelled)
Heating	Your summer and winter electricity bills

Remember – when your Disability Allowance is reviewed, we need to see proof of any costs that have increased or are new. Ask us for a Disability Allowance file to keep your receipts in.

Special Disability Allowance

The Special Disability Allowance may help with the costs of visiting your partner if they are in hospital (for at least 13 weeks) or getting the Residential Care Subsidy. You must be on a benefit to get this allowance of \$34.87 a week (as at 1 April 2009), which is paid with your benefit.

Modification Grant

We also have the Modification Grant for people with disabilities that helps with the costs of special equipment you may need at work, or changes to your workplace so it's easier for you to work. To get the Modification Grant you must have a disability that's likely to last at least six months.

Child Disability Allowance

The Child Disability Allowance is paid to the main caregiver of a child or young person with a serious disability in recognition of the extra care needed for that child.

To qualify, you must be:

- a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, who normally lives here *and*
- the main caregiver of a child *or*
- have care and control of the child for the time being if there is no main caregiver.

Also, the child must:

- have a serious physical or intellectual disability *and*
- be aged under 18 years *and*
- need constant care and attention for at least 12 months because of their disability.

You may be able to get both the Disability Allowance and the Child Disability Allowance for the same child. But you can't get this allowance if the child already gets a benefit (except for the Orphan's or the Unsupported Child's Benefit). If the child is aged 16 years or over, they may be able to get the Invalid's Benefit.

The Child Disability Allowance is \$42.11 a week (as at 1 April 2009) for each child who qualifies. This is a set amount and doesn't depend on your income or costs. This allowance is paid into your bank account every two weeks and is paid separately from any other assistance you may get.

In most cases it won't affect any other assistance you may get from us.

Tell us about changes

It is important you tell us about any changes that may affect your payments. See our *How can we help you?* brochure for a list of the kinds of things we need to know about.

For the Child Disability Allowance we also need to know if the child leaves your care or goes into hospital.

Important

To apply for any of these types of assistance, it is important that you contact us as soon as possible, as this will affect the date payments can start from.

If you are applying for the Disability Allowance and the Child Disability Allowance, your doctor must fill in part of the application form. You will need to bring this when you meet with us.

Try to make sure you bring everything you need to your meeting. However, if you do not have all of the information available, it is important that you still meet with us.

For the assistance described in this brochure, there is a list of all the basic things you will need to provide on the front of each application. It can also be found in our *How can we help you?* brochure.

Remember, if you don't think you qualify for these allowances, there may be some other way we can help, so please ask us.

If you have any questions,
you can call us free on
0800 559 009.



If you have any questions,
call us on **0800 559 009** from
7am to 6pm Monday to Friday
and Saturday 8am to 1pm or
contact your Case Manager at
your nearest Service Centre.

**If you are deaf or find it hard to
communicate by phone,** you can
send a message to our Deaf Link
free-fax on **0800 621 621** or email
MSD_Deaf_Services@msd.govt.nz

For more information visit:
Work and Income website
www.workandincome.govt.nz