

Part 21: Dental treatment

This Part of the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines is made under sections 11A, 11AA, 23, 28 and 58 of the *Motor Accidents (Lifetime Care and Support) Act 2006* (the Act).

This version of Part 21 of the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines (the Guidelines) takes effect on the date of gazettal in the NSW Government Gazette and, on and from that date, applies to all participants in the Scheme, whether interim or lifetime, and whether accepted into the Scheme before or after the date of gazettal.

The Lifetime Care and Support Authority (Lifetime Care) may waive observance of any part or parts of this Guideline. Waiving observance of all or part of this Guideline in any particular circumstances is not an indication that Lifetime Care will waive observance of this part or any other parts of the Guidelines in other circumstances.

1 Reasonable and necessary dental treatment

- 1.1 Lifetime Care considers dental treatment to be reasonable and necessary when treatment is:
 - a) required as a direct result of the motor accident injury;
 - b) related to, or caused by, side effects of medications for the motor accident injury, and this is evidenced by supporting information from a medical or dental practitioner;
 - c) required because of failure to maintain dental health due to treatment required as a result of the motor accident (such as an extended stay in an intensive care unit);
 - d) in accordance with accepted dental practice;
 - e) provided by a dental practitioner or other specialist (such as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon) registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) or other appropriate professional body if the participant resides outside Australia; and
 - f) intended to restore a participant's dentition to a level that is consistent with their pre-injury standard of dental care.
- 1.2 Lifetime Care considers routine dental treatment to be reasonable and necessary only when treatment is:
 - a) a direct result of the motor accident injury (such as severe traumatic brain injury affecting the participant's ability to brush their teeth);
 - b) required in addition to the level of pre-injury routine dental treatment (such as oral spasticity requiring more frequent dental treatment by a dental practitioner); and
 - c) required to ensure that other forms of dental treatment can be provided (such as a participant with traumatic brain injury requiring a general anaesthetic to treat dental caries).
- 1.3 Lifetime Care does not consider the following dental treatments to be reasonable and necessary:
 - a) a treatment or service solely for aesthetic purposes, such as teeth whitening;
 - b) a treatment or service that is of no clear benefit to a participant; and
 - c) repeat treatment required due to a participant's lack of dental hygiene, unless the reason for treatment is assessed as related to the motor accident injury. *For example, cognitive and behavioural issues associated with traumatic brain injury.*
- 1.4 Lifetime Care considers reasonable expenses in relation to the participant's assessed treatment and care needs in relation to dental treatment will not include:
 - a) a treatment or service inconsistent with the participant's pre-injury standard of dental care unless the reason for treatment is assessed as being exacerbated or aggravated by the motor accident injury;
 - b) a treatment or service where there is no published peer-reviewed evidence relating to its safety

or effectiveness;

- c) fees associated with non-attendance (unless the reason for non-attendance is beyond the participant's control); and
- d) standard household expenses associated with dental care such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss and mouthwash.

2 Method of assessment and criteria used to determine reasonable and necessary treatment and care needs for or in connection with dental treatment

- 2.1 Lifetime Care's assessment of a participant's treatment and care needs for or in connection with dental treatment must:
 - a) be made in collaboration with the participant and dental practitioner; and
 - b) take into account the participant's injury-related needs and their impact on the participant's ability to perform or be assisted with dental hygiene tasks.
- 2.2 Information required by Lifetime Care to make an assessment includes:
 - a) information relating to the motor accident, to establish whether dental injuries may have occurred through direct trauma to the mouth or facial injuries;
 - b) information from a medical practitioner as to the likely cause of the presenting dental needs, if the participant has pre-existing or co-existing medical conditions that may impact on their need for dental treatment;
 - c) information from any or all dentists where the participant received treatment prior to their injury;
 - d) a fully itemised account or quotation from a registered practitioner;
 - e) an outline of the goals of the proposed treatment; and
 - f) information about the participant's injury-related needs and the ability to perform, or be assisted with, any recommended dental hygiene that the treatment may require.
- 2.3 Information required by Lifetime Care to make an assessment may include a second opinion or quote in circumstances where:
 - a) the relationship to the motor accident injury is unclear; or
 - b) Lifetime Care regards the dental treatment as complex or extensive.
- 2.4 The dental treatment must be requested prior to commencement of the treatment unless the treatment is emergency treatment or is otherwise urgent.

3 Dentures and other removable appliances

- 3.1 Where the participant required a removable appliance prior to the motor accident, Lifetime Care will not replace the removable appliance if lost or damaged in the motor accident, in hospital or inpatient rehabilitation unless:
 - a) there is a direct impact on other accident-related dental treatment if the removable appliance was not replaced at the same time; and
 - b) there is evidence of direct trauma to the mouth from the accident.