

## **Part 21: Dental treatment**

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

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 applies to any assessment of treatment and care needs relating to dental treatment made on and from that date in respect of any participant 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 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 or any other Guideline in any other circumstances.

### **1 Reasonable and necessary dental treatment**

- 1.1 Lifetime Care considers treatment and care needs in connection with 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 treatment and care needs for 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 The following dental treatments are not considered reasonable and necessary treatment and care needs:

- 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 The reasonable expenses in relation to the participant's assessed treatment and care needs in relation to dental treatment will not generally 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 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,
- e) 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 The assessment of treatment and care needs 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 assess a participant's treatment or care need for or in connection with dental treatment 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- or co-existing medical conditions that may impact on their needs for or in connection with 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 assess a participant's treatment or care need in connection with dental treatment 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 in all circumstances unless the treatment is emergency treatment or is otherwise urgent.

### **3 Dentures**

3.1 Where the participant required dentures prior to the motor accident, Lifetime Care will not replace dentures 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 dentures were not replaced at the same time; and
- b) there is evidence of direct trauma to the mouth from the accident.