

Allied Health FACT Sheet

Why have I been referred to an Occupational Therapist (OT) for Equipment?

"Do I really need an OT assessment?"

Many people ask this question when they are referred to an Occupational Therapist (OT), Physiotherapist, or other allied health professional for equipment.

The simple answer is: **sometimes yes, sometimes no.**

Under the Australian Government's Support at Home Program, equipment is categorised according to the level of risk and complexity. Some items can be supplied directly, while others require professional advice or assessment to ensure they are safe and appropriate

What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) is equipment that helps people remain safe, independent and living at home.

Examples include:

- ✓ Shower chairs and shower stools
- ✓ Raised toilet seats
- ✓ Transfer aids
- ✓ Bed and positioning equipment
- ✓ Walking frames and mobility aids
- ✓ Pressure cushions
- ✓ Wheelchairs and scooters

Why Can't I Just Buy the Equipment?

Some equipment may appear simple but can create safety risks if it is the wrong size, incorrectly adjusted, or unsuitable for your home environment.

For example, a shower chair may need consideration of:

- Your balance and mobility
- How you transfer on and off the seat
- Your height and physical needs
- The size and layout of your bathroom
- Falls risks
- Skin and pressure care requirements

The goal is to make sure equipment improves safety and independence rather than creating new risks.

When is an OT Assessment Required?

Low-Risk Items

Simple equipment that is generally safe to select and use without professional assessment.

Examples may include:

- Basic daily living aids like a shoehorn or long handled sponge
- Simple household safety products like nonslip mats

Under Advice Items

Equipment that may benefit from professional advice to ensure it is suitable and adjusted correctly.

Examples may include:

- Shower seating
- Basic seating

Prescribed Items

More complex, customised or higher-risk equipment that requires assessment and prescription by a qualified health professional.

Examples may include:

- Wheelchairs
- Hoists
- Mobility equipment

Who Pays for the Assessment?

Under the Support at Home Program, clinical assessments provided by Occupational Therapists and other allied health professionals are funded separately from the cost of equipment. This reflects the important role clinical assessment plays in ensuring equipment is safe, appropriate and effective.

Are Referrals Just About Making Money?

No.

Support at Home providers are required to ensure recommendations are:

- ✓ Necessary
- ✓ Safe
- ✓ Appropriate to your needs
- ✓ Evidence-based
- ✓ Person-centred

Providers and health professionals must be able to justify their recommendations and demonstrate that public funding is being used appropriately.

Questions You Can Ask

If you are unsure why a referral has been recommended, you can ask:

- Why do I need an assessment?
- What risks are being considered?
- Is this item low-risk, under advice, or prescribed?
- What could happen if I use the equipment without assessment?

A good provider should be able to explain the reason for any recommendation in clear, simple language.

Key Message

The purpose of OT involvement is not to create extra costs.

It is to help ensure that equipment is:

✓ Safe ✓ Appropriate ✓ Good value for money ✓ Matched to your individual needs ✓ Supportive of your independence at home

The right equipment, selected correctly, can help reduce falls, prevent injuries and support you to continue living safely and independently at home.

Want to check the facts?

Scan the QR codes or visit the official Australian Government and My Aged Care websites listed above. These resources provide the most up-to-date information about Support at Home, assistive technology, home modifications and assessment requirements.

Scan for Support at Home



Government overview

Scan for AT-HM Scheme



Equipment & home modifications rules

Scan for My Aged Care



Consumer information