Home Enteral Nutrition Services in NSW

Information for Health Care Workers, Disability Support Staff and Health Professionals

Home Enteral Nutrition

Home Enteral Nutrition (HEN) is a way of providing nutrition when children and adults who live at home cannot eat and drink normally or consume enough food or drink to keep them well and healthy. HEN can be a nutritional supplement drink, thickened fluids, or a special formula given by a tube into the stomach or bowel (tube feeding).

Reasons for HEN

People may need HEN for many reasons. For example a person may:

- Not be able to eat or drink enough to meet their nutritional needs through their diet alone.
- Have dysphagia (or swallowing difficulty) after a stroke or as a result of head and neck cancer.
- Have a physical or intellectual disability and have difficulty eating or drinking.
- May not be able to absorb enough nutrition from their food and drinks due to bowel disease or surgery.
- Speech Pathologists assess and monitor swallowing safety for food and drinks and can prescribe thickened fluids and thickeners.
- Registered Nurses provide support and educate people on how to use and manage their feeding tube and can prescribe equipment (feeding tubes, extension sets etc).

HEN Health Professionals

People that need HEN are best supported by a multidisciplinary team, including a doctor and the following health professionals:

- Dietitians determine and monitor the person’s nutrition requirements and can prescribe formula, supplements, and some HEN equipment (feeding sets, pumps etc).
- Speech Pathologists assess and monitor swallowing safety for food and drinks and can prescribe thickened fluids and thickeners.
- Registered Nurses provide support and educate people on how to use and manage their feeding tube and can prescribe equipment (feeding tubes, extension sets etc).

Accessing HEN products

Some HEN products can be purchased from pharmacies; however people who need HEN may be able to purchase HEN products at lower prices and have them delivered to their door. To be eligible, the person should:

- Need HEN for more than one month.
- Be under the care of a dietitian, speech pathologist or registered nurse working in a NSW public healthcare facility such as a hospital, community health centre, or services provided by Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC).
Live at home, or in a supported accommodation service eg group home or alternative family placement.

Residents in nursing homes may not be eligible and are funded by the federal government.

To prescribe HEN products, the health professional must:
1. Complete the relevant HEN registration and order form (an account code is required and available from the HEN supplier).
2. Fax or email the completed forms to the HEN supplier.
3. Provide a copy of the forms to the person requiring HEN, or their carer. The person requiring HEN, or their carer, then contacts the HEN supplier to make a payment and organise delivery.
4. Review the need for HEN products at least every 12 months.

Other services available to people who need HEN

EnableNSW

NSW Health provides assistance for equipment services to people with a permanent or long term disability through EnableNSW. EnableNSW coordinates the Aids and Equipment Program which provides consumable products for people who need tube feeding for more than 12 months. To request assistance, an application form is completed by the person needing HEN (or their carer) and an equipment request form is completed by a dietitian or registered nurse. Nutrition supplements, formula and thickened fluids are not provided through EnableNSW.

For more information please contact EnableNSW. Phone 1800 ENABLE (1800 362 253), or www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au

Aids for individuals in Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) operated accommodation services (AIDAS)

AIDAS is the way ADHC contributes funds for personal aids and appliances for people living in ADHC operated group homes, large residential centres and specialist supported living services. This includes products and equipment for people who need tube feeding.

Gastrostomy Information and Support Society (GISS)

GISS is a support group for people with gastrostomy feeding tubes and their carers. GISS is run by volunteers and has support groups in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. Visit the GISS website www.giss.org.au

For more information

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) – HEN Network

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) was established by the NSW Government to lead clinician and consumer involvement in improving health services. The ACI HEN Network has nearly 300 members who work together to improve care for people needing HEN in NSW. The Network has developed tools and resources to help people who require HEN, their carers and health professionals.

Resources include:
• Guidelines for HEN Services
• HEN information Cards, for example:
  • Feeding plan templates
  • Troubleshooting – HEN and feeding tubes
  • Tube care and management
  • Weight charts and growth charts.

Some of these resources have been translated into different languages.

Resources and information are available from http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/nutrition, or contact the ACI on (02) 9464 4666.

If you would like to join the HEN Network, please contact the Network Manager via the ACI website http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/nutrition/contacts

This information sheet was developed by the ACI HEN Network, EnableNSW and Ageing, Disability and Home Care.