

Home Enteral Nutrition Services in NSW

Information for Individuals and their Carers



What is Home Enteral Nutrition (HEN)?

Home enteral nutrition (HEN) is a way of providing nutrition when children and adults living at home cannot eat and drink normally or get 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 (this is called tube feeding).

Who may need HEN?

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

- Not be able to eat or drink enough to meet their nutritional needs through their diet alone

- Have swallowing problems after a stroke or as a result of treatment for head and neck cancer
- Have a physical or intellectual disability and have difficulty eating or drinking.
- Not be able to absorb enough nutrition from their food and drinks due to bowel disease or surgery.

What help is available?

There is help available to:

- have the HEN products (nutritional drinks, formulas, thickened fluids and equipment such as feeding tubes) you need delivered to your home
- find the right health professional
- provide the information you need.

Who can help?

Your doctor will be able to tell you if you need HEN. Other health professionals who can help are:

- **The dietitian** – this person can help you work out what food, drink or nutrition formula you need to stay healthy and can order nutritional drinks, formula and some HEN equipment (for example feeding sets and pumps) for you.

- **The speech pathologist** – this person will assess the safety of your swallowing for food and drinks. They can order thickened fluids or thickening powder if you need them.
- **The registered nurse** – this person helps you look after your feeding tube and can order HEN equipment (for example feeding tubes) for you.

Where can I get HEN products?

Some HEN products can be purchased at a chemist. People who need HEN may be able to obtain their HEN products at lower prices, delivered to their home.

To be eligible, you must:

- Need HEN for more than one month
- See a dietitian, speech pathologist or registered nurse who works for a NSW Health facility at least every 12 months. This means they work in a hospital, a community health centre, or as part of a service provided by Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC).

To access HEN services, does it matter where I live?

You can get HEN services if you live anywhere in NSW. People live in many different types of homes such as:

- A private home,
- Supported accommodation service eg group home,
- Alternative family placement.

If you move to another state or territory in Australia, you may need to find out about the local HEN services as they may be different. Your Doctor or health professional can help with this.



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

Where can I get more information or support?

- Your Doctor
- Your health professional
- The NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI). The ACI is an organisation within NSW Health that works with health professionals and the community to improve health care for people in NSW. The ACI HEN Network has developed tools and information to help you and your carer manage HEN at home.

Contact the ACI on **(02) 9464 4666**.

Visit the ACI website **<http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/nutrition>**

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