



Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care

**A Guide to Receiving
Home Care Services in Nova Scotia**



Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care

A Guide to Receiving Home Care Services in Nova Scotia

Most people want to live at home for as long as possible. Everyone has different needs that may change over time. Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care provides programs and services to help you live well at home.

When possible, home is the best place to support your recovery and make long-term decisions. Being home promotes more activity and independence. Some people want to be at home at the end of their life. We can provide some of the supports you need to stay at home or help you return home after a hospital stay.

Our goal is to support you. Nova Scotia Health promotes a Home First approach and we will work with you to find ways to help you live the life you want where you want to be.

We are here to answer your questions. We will work with you or your substitute decision maker (if appointed) to arrange the right support and services for you. These services are in addition to the care you receive from your support person (help from friends, family, loved ones, or individuals you have hired).

We understand that it can be stressful when you or your loved one needs help to stay living at home. This guide will help you and your loved one better understand and get ready to receive home care services.



The Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) may be a spouse, partner, companion, family member, friend, or adult next of kin.



If you would like to explore home care service options:

- phone (toll-free): 1-800-225-7225

If you already have home care services and have questions:

- contact your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator.

For more information:

- Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care
<https://www.nshealth.ca/continuing-care>
- Nova Scotia Health Home First (video)
<https://vimeo.com/376214224>
- Government of Nova Scotia Continuing Care
<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/home-care.asp>

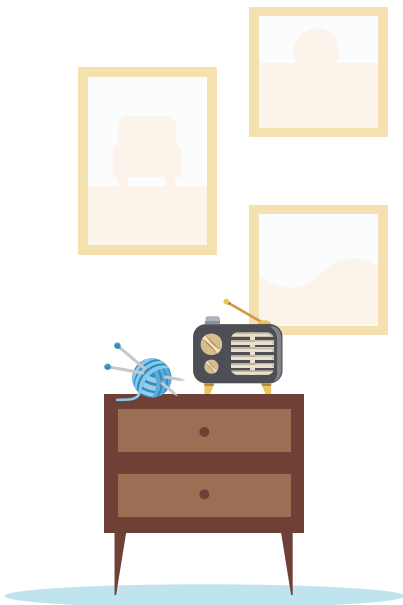


A large, light-orange rounded rectangular area containing seven horizontal dashed lines for writing. Each line is preceded by a small, empty square checkbox.





What is Home Care?



Home care services offer supports that provide care where you live.

Home care includes home support services and nursing services in your home. Our goals are to:

- help you keep up or improve your health and quality of life.
- help you maintain your independence (hobbies and social interactions).
- give your support person assistance.
- support you once you or your substitute decision maker have decided that treatment to extend your life is no longer the main goal and you have chosen comfort and/or end-of-life care.

Home support services provide help with daily living activities including bathing, dressing, meal preparation, range of motion exercises, housekeeping, laundry, and relief and/or respite services for your support person. Relief or respite services are offered in the home for support persons who care for someone who cannot be left alone. Respite gives your support person a break from caregiving.

Nursing services include short-term or long-term nursing services by registered nurses (RN) and licensed practical nurses (LPN). This may include IV therapy, catheter or bowel care, wound care, medication management, and general nursing care.

Depending on where you live, home care nursing services are provided by either the Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada (VON) or Nova Scotia Health nurses.

We work with home care agencies that have been selected and approved by the provincial government. They must follow all applicable laws, policies, and standards. For a list of agencies, visit: https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/Home_Support.pdf.

Nova Scotia Health also has a number of other programs and services.

- visit <https://www.nshealth.ca/continuing-care> to learn more
- phone (toll-free): 1-800-225-7225, or
- talk to your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator

How do I access home care services?

If you, your support person, or your primary health care provider feel that you need home care services, you, or anyone you give permission to, can call:

- phone (toll-free): 1-800-225-7225
- hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 7 days a week
- if you get our voicemail, please leave a message and we will call you back.

Before you call, make sure you have the following information at hand:

- your date of birth,
- your provincial health card number,
- your address,
- your primary health care provider's (family doctor or nurse practitioner) name if you have one,
- general health information (like allergies, health limitations, or concerns), and
- information about your home environment.

What will happen when I call?

You will talk with a Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care referral assistant who will ask you what services you need and a little bit about you and your situation.

If you are calling on behalf of someone else, we will need to confirm that you have that person's permission to make a referral to us.

If you are redirected to voicemail, please leave a message with your name and telephone number and we will call you back.

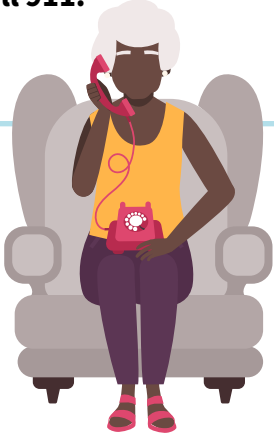
If we determine that we may be able to help, you will be assigned a care coordinator who will contact you within 4 week(s). At that time, the care coordinator will gather additional information over the phone about your care situation.



You do not need a referral from a health care provider like your doctor. You can call us directly.



If you feel that your health or safety is threatened, or if it is an emergency, call 911.



Is there a wait list for home care services?

There are wait lists in some areas for home support services. Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will tell you if there is a wait list in your area.

There are many things that affect the amount of time you may be on the wait list. If you are waiting for services, please call your home care service provider for wait list updates.

There is no wait list for nursing services. There may be occasional delays in service starts. If this occurs, we will contact you.

If your care needs change while you are waiting, please call your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator.

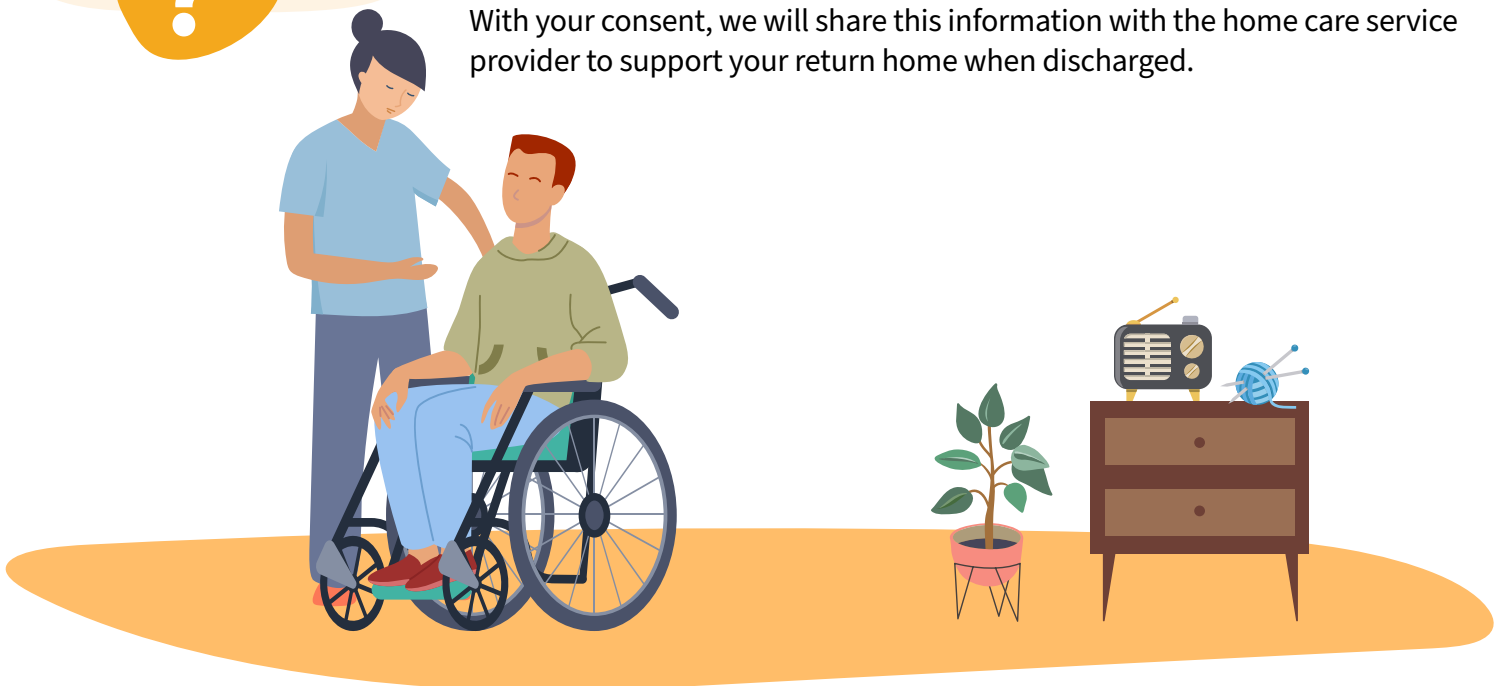
What happens if I need home care services in order to leave hospital?

If you are in hospital and your health care team determines that you need Continuing Care services when you return home:

- with your consent, your health care team will refer you to Continuing Care.
- you can refer yourself to us by asking a member of your health care team to have the Nova Scotia Health hospital based care coordinator visit you.

The Nova Scotia Health hospital based care coordinator will meet with you in hospital, and anyone else you want to involve, to assess your care needs.

The information the Nova Scotia Health hospital based care coordinator gathers will be used to determine the services you need and to develop a care plan. With your consent, we will share this information with the home care service provider to support your return home when discharged.



What does a Nova Scotia Health care coordinator do?

A Nova Scotia Health care coordinator is a licensed health care professional who will meet with you, either in the hospital or in the community, to assess your care needs. We encourage you to have someone you trust and who knows your situation join you for this assessment.

You will be assigned a Nova Scotia Health care coordinator who works in your community. The information the Nova Scotia Health care coordinator gathers will be used to determine the services you need and to develop a care plan. The Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will work with you while you are receiving home care services at home.

As your needs change, your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will reassess your situation and work with you to adjust your care plan, as needed.

What will happen at my first home visit with my Nova Scotia Health care coordinator?

Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will call to arrange a time to meet. We encourage you to have anyone you want present at this meeting.

We will ask questions about:

- your health,
- your physical care needs,
- your home,
- any safety concerns you may have, and
- your current supports
(help from friends, family, or individuals you have hired).

Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will also need to view your Notice of Assessment from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for the previous tax year. This helps them determine what fees, if any, you may be required to pay for some services.

We will be asking you to sign a *Consent to Gather and Share Information* form. This form states that you agree to share your personal and health information.

Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will identify the services you are eligible for and give you information about the program. If your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator finds that you need and are eligible for home care services, we will work with you and your support person to create a care plan that is right for you.

My
Nova Scotia Health
care coordinator:

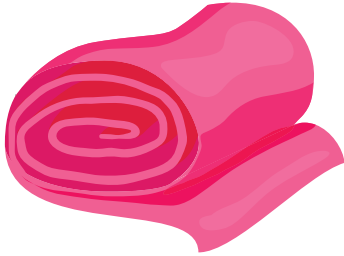
Phone:





If you agree to service, we will tell your home care service provider what services you need. Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will also:

- regularly reassess your care needs, and
- be available if your needs change and your care plan needs to be adjusted.



Who delivers home care services and what does a home care service provider do?

Home care services are delivered by home care agencies that have been selected and approved by the provincial government. They must follow all applicable laws, policies, and standards. For a list of agencies, visit: https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/Home_Support.pdf.

Your home care service provider will help you with the care needs listed in your care plan, like:

- bathing
- getting dressed
- preparing and serving meals
- light housekeeping
- respite



What will happen at my first visit with my home care service provider?

The home care service provider will call to arrange a time for an initial home visit. The time of subsequent visits may be different.

Note: You may have workers from more than one provider if you need different types of care (like home support and nursing services).

Prior to any visit, they **may** call to advise of their arrival time. They may ask you questions to find out if you have flu or respiratory illness symptoms.

When your home care service provider arrives, they will:

- review their policies with you,
- explain the services they will be providing,
- ask you to **consent** to receiving the service. You can consent verbally over the phone before the first visit or in person at the first visit,
- give you their contact information,
- explain when you should call them and when you should call your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator,
- explain how to cancel or reschedule a visit. They will also explain what will happen if you do not call to cancel or if you are not home for a scheduled visit.

They may also do a home safety assessment.

Note: You may not receive services during this first visit.



My home care service provider:

Phone:

What does a nursing service provider do?

A nursing service provider will:

- assess your nursing care needs,
- work closely with your primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner),
- provide nursing care,
- monitor your progress,
- make sure you have enough medical supplies, and
- decide if you need more nursing visits.

You will receive nursing services in a local clinic if:

- you are referred by a doctor or a nurse practitioner,
- you are eligible for home care nursing services,
- there is a clinic available in your area, and
- you are able to go to a clinic.

If you are unable to go to a clinic, or a clinic is not available in your area, you may receive nursing services at home. The nursing service provider will contact you to organize your first visit.

If you are receiving nursing services through a VON clinic and you need to cancel your clinic appointment, phone (toll-free): **1-888-866-2273**, choose “**clinic**” option

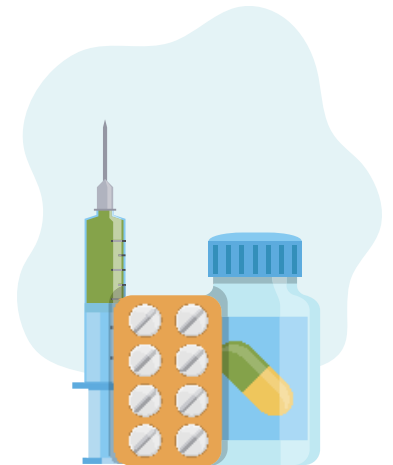
What will happen at my first visit with my nursing service provider?

Prior to the first home visit, the nursing service provider **may** call you to ask questions to find out if you have flu or respiratory illness symptoms.

When you meet with the nurse, the provider will:

- explain the services being provided,
- ask you to consent to receiving the service,
- assess your care needs,
- provide nursing care,
- provide any nursing supplies you will need (there is no cost for these supplies),
- give you their contact information,
- explain when you should call your nurse and when you should call your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator,
- explain how to cancel or reschedule a visit.

My VON Clinic location:



My nursing service provider:

Phone:



When should I contact my Nova Scotia Health care coordinator? When should I contact my home care service provider or nursing service provider?

Nova Scotia Health care coordinators are responsible for assessing your needs and authorizing and coordinating your access to services. Contact your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator if:

- your care needs have changed, or
- you have questions or concerns about your care plan.

Home care service providers are responsible for delivering home care service. Contact your home care service provider if:

- you need to reschedule or cancel a visit, or
- you have questions or concerns about the home support services you are receiving.

Nursing service providers are responsible for delivering nursing services. Contact your nursing service provider if:

- you need to reschedule or cancel a visit, or
- you have questions or concerns about the nursing care you are receiving.

If you are not sure who to talk with, call your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator. If you cannot reach your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator, phone (toll-free): 1-800-225-7225.

What happens if my home care service provider or my nursing service provider does not arrive at the scheduled time?

If your home care service provider or nursing service provider does not arrive, call their agency or schedulers to ask if your appointment has been canceled or rescheduled. They will tell you to start your back-up plan if they are not coming.

Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care, home care service providers, and nursing service providers do their best to make sure your needs are met at home. This may not always be possible (for example, because of bad weather). It is important to have a back-up plan that includes supports to help meet your care needs.

Be sure to review your back-up plan with your home care service provider and Nova Scotia Health care coordinator.

What will happen if I need to cancel a visit?

We recognize that there may be times when you need to cancel or reschedule a visit. Your home care service provider will tell you if you will have to give 24 hours (one day) or 48 hours (two days) notice when cancelling. They will also tell you if you do not give enough notice, you may be charged a cancellation fee for home support visits.

By providing enough notice to the agency, you allow them time to plan to provide care to others who may be waiting for services.

If you regularly cancel visits, your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will call you to talk about your ongoing need for service.

What do I need to have before I call Continuing Care or have my first visit?

- **Before you call Continuing Care intake (1-800-225-7225), you need to have:**

- your date of birth,
- your health card number,
- your address, and
- your primary health care provider's name (if you have one).

- **Before your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator visits, you need to locate your:**

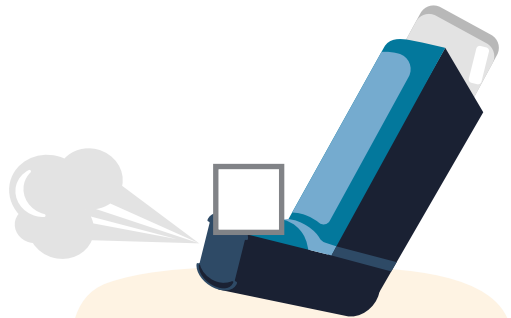
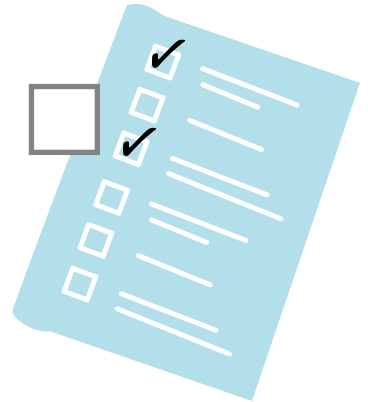
- CRA Notice of Assessment from the previous tax year, and
- list of all medications you are currently taking (including vitamins, supplements, and over-the-counter medications).

- **Before your home care service provider visits, depending on your service, you may need:**

- health equipment to care safer and easier (e.g., a bath bench, grab bars, or a transfer sheet),
- cleaning supplies (like a mop and a bucket), and
- groceries to prepare meals.

- **Before your nursing service provider visits, remember:**

- not all nursing supplies will be provided. Please make sure if you have been asked to obtain supplies that the supplies are available (e.g., ostomy supplies), and
- complete any tasks the nurse has asked you to do before the visit.



-----

How will I be involved in planning my care?

You are an important member of your health care team. You can expect to:

- be treated with dignity and respect,
- be treated in a way that respects your culture, ethnicity, family, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and other important parts of who you are, and
- receive safe and respectful care.

For more information, see the *Important Information for You* pamphlet (<https://www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/2120.pdf>), provided by your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator.

We are committed to providing you with high quality, safe care. We encourage you to talk openly about your care with your health care team members. We want to make sure you know and understand your options for care, and the risks and benefits of each. Our goal is to find the right supports and services for you by:

- understanding your needs,
- understanding what is important to you, and
- learning about your goals of care.

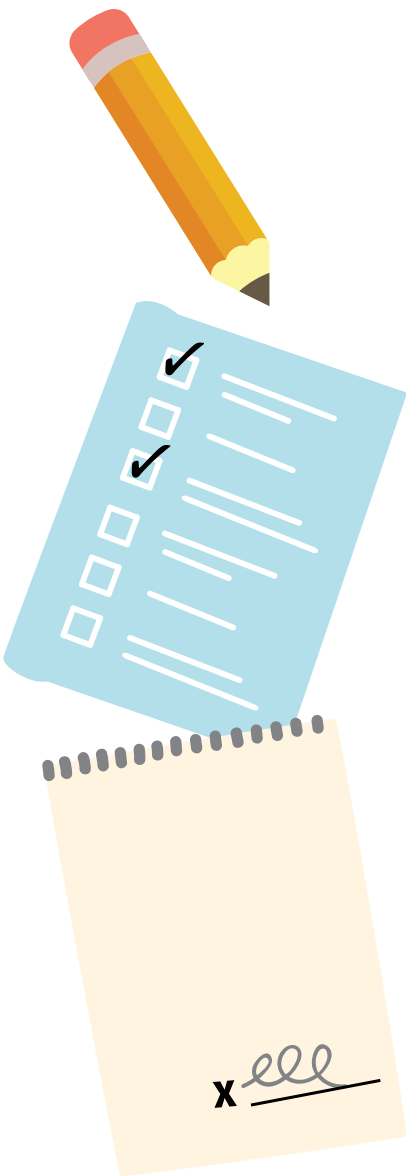
Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will work with you to identify the supports you need to stay at home. We encourage you to ask questions and express any concerns you may have until you have all the information you need to make informed care decisions.

Everyone's care needs are different, and your needs may change over time. We encourage you or your support person to contact your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator as your needs change.

If you no longer need or want Continuing Care services, your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will work with you to make a discharge plan that will end your services. If you have a question or a concern about stopping your services, call your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator.

If your situation changes after your services have ended and you need Continuing Care services again, you (or someone you give permission to), can call us with a new referral:

- phone (toll-free): 1-800-225-7225



Do I have to pay for home care services?

There may be a cost for home support services. This is based on your income and how many people you live with. Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will work with you to find out if there is a cost for you. To view the home care income table, visit <https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/FactSheets/Home-Care-Fee-Structure.pdf>.

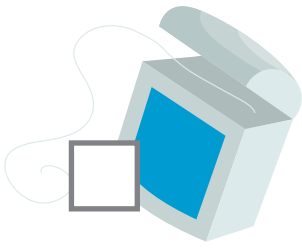
There is no cost for nursing services. There may be a cost for some supplies (e.g., catheter or ostomy supplies).

How do I pay these fees?

Each home care service provider has their own payment process. They will explain the process during their first call or visit. This is a good time to talk to them about any concerns you may have.







How do I get ready to receive home care or nursing services?

We ask that you make sure your home is safe for your health care team to work in. If it is not safe, we will work with you to help make it safe. If your home is still not safe, we will try to help you find other ways to get the care you need.

If anyone in your home smokes, do not smoke in the home at least one hour prior to and during any home visit.

No one in the home can be under the influence of illegal substances, non-medical cannabis and/or alcohol during a visit. There will be zero tolerance for this behavior.

Clear snow and ice from your home's entrance and make sure it is well-lit.

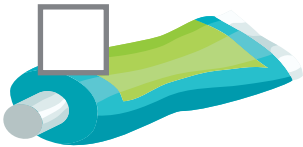
Store any firearms or weapons in a locked cabinet or secured area in accordance with **federal firearms regulations**.

Keep all pets secured and away from the area in which you will receive care.

You may need to have certain equipment available (like a bath bench, grab bars, or a commode). This will depend on your needs.

If you are receiving:

- **housekeeping service**, you must provide the cleaning supplies in their original container.
- **personal care**, you must provide your personal care items (like soap, deodorant, and toothpaste).
- **meal preparation**, you must provide the food.
- **nursing services**, nursing supplies (like bandages, intravenous [IV] equipment) will be provided. Other supplies such as catheter or ostomy supplies are not provided. Your nursing service provider will tell you if you need to get supplies.



How do I give feedback about Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care?

If you would like to give feedback, we encourage you to contact us. Your concerns about your health and care are important to us. When you tell us about your experience, good or bad, it helps us improve the care and service we provide.

If you have concerns about the **amount** or **type** of home care service you are receiving, call your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator. If they are not able to resolve your concern, please ask them to have their manager call you. You can also call their manager directly. We want to help you resolve any issues you may have.

My Nova Scotia Health care coordinator's manager:

.....

Phone:

If you are not comfortable talking directly to your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator or their manager, please call our patient relations team:

- phone (toll free): 1-844-884-4177, or
- visit: <https://www.nshealth.ca/contact-us/patientfamily-feedback-commentaires-des-patients-et-des-familles> to provide your feedback.

How do I give feedback about my home care services or nursing services?

If you have concerns about your home care services, call your home care service provider. If you have concerns about your nursing service provider, call your nursing service provider. They want to hear from you and will do everything they can to resolve your concern.

My home care service provider:

.....

My nursing service provider:

.....

Phone number for scheduling concerns:

.....

Phone number for all other matters:

.....



.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....





How do I appeal a decision?

You have the right to appeal a decision that is made about your care, like:

- your care assessment,
- service planning,
- discharge from service, and
- fees.

Ask your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator for more information about the appeal process or visit:

- Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care Service Eligibility Decision Review Policy https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/policies/policyManual/Service_Decision_Review_Policy.pdf

How can I be sure that my information will be kept confidential?

All Nova Scotia Health employees will give you as much privacy as possible when planning and providing your care. They will gather only the information they need to know to provide you with safe care. And they will only share information with your consent.

We will keep your information confidential. We will only share personal information (like your address and phone number) and personal health information (like the services you need) that you agree we can share with people who need it to provide your services.

Your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator will ask you to sign a *Consent for Assessment Service Referral and to Obtain and Share Information* form before we share any information. Even after you sign this consent form, you have the right to refuse service or to not share information with your home care service provider or nursing service provider if you choose.



What is the role of a substitute decision maker?

A Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) is a person who provides consent or refusal of consent for care and services for you if:

- you are not able to do so for yourself, and
- you have given this authority to someone you trust.

Your SDM can make decisions about personal care like health care, nutrition, clothing, hygiene, and safety.

If you have not already completed a Personal Directive to identify an SDM, we encourage you to do so.



What if home care cannot meet my needs?

If home care cannot meet your needs, your Nova Scotia Health care coordinator may talk with you about other options. If you can no longer live safely at home or your care needs exceed what home care can provide, your care coordinator may recommend long-term care.

For more information about getting ready for long-term care, how your health care team and support person can help, and how to find long-term care, visit:

- **A Guide to Moving into Long-Term Care in Nova Scotia**
www.nshealth.ca/content/long-term-care
- **Government of Nova Scotia – Continuing Care**
<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/long-term-care.asp>

To learn more about creating a Personal Directive and assigning an SDM, visit:

- 211 Nova Scotia – Personal Directives in Nova Scotia <https://ns.211.ca/services/government-of-nova-scotia-department-of-justice-head-office/personal-directives-in-nova-scotia>
- Personal Directives in NS – Department of Justice <https://novascotia.ca/just/pda>



We make every effort to help you move to the home you prefer to live in.

My notes...

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.

Additional resources

Nova Scotia Health – Continuing Care
www.nshealth.ca/continuing-care

Government of Nova Scotia Home Care Agencies Directory
http://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/Home_Support.pdf

Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care – Continuing Care Branch
<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs>

Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care – Home Care Policy Manual
https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/policies/HomeCare_Policy_Manual.pdf

Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care Continuing Care
Branch – Service Eligibility Decision Review Policy
[https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/policies/policyManual/
Service_Decision_Review_Policy.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/policies/policyManual/Service_Decision_Review_Policy.pdf)

211 Nova Scotia
<https://ns.211.ca>

Caregivers Nova Scotia
<http://caregiversns.org>

Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia
<http://alzheimer.ca/en/ns>

Nova Scotia Government Positive Aging Directory
<https://novascotia.ca/seniors/directory>

