

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is a tax-free benefit for people aged 65 or over who need someone to help look after them because they are physically or mentally disabled. Following is advice about Attendance allowance and information which could tell you if you are eligible and how to claim.

Are you eligible?

You may get Attendance Allowance if:

- you have a physical disability (including sensory disability, such as blindness), a mental disability (including learning difficulties), or both
- your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or someone to supervise you, for your own or someone else's safety
- you are aged 65 or over when you claim

Normally, you must have had these care or supervision needs for at least six months.

However, if you are terminally ill, there are special rules for claiming the benefit.

If you are under age 65, you may be able to get Disability Living Allowance.

Attendance Allowance is not usually affected by any savings or income you may have.

Special Rules - if you are terminally ill

We have special rules for people who are terminally ill. This means people who have a progressive illness and are not expected to live more than another six months. You can get the higher rate of Attendance Allowance straight away.

If you have a progressive disease and are not reasonably expected to live for more than another six months, there are special rules to help you get Attendance Allowance more quickly and easily. You can get the higher rate immediately, whatever your care needs are, without waiting until you have needed help for six months.

You can make a claim for someone under the special rules without them knowing or without their permission. If they satisfy the relevant conditions, they will get a letter saying that they have been awarded Attendance Allowance, but special rules will not be mentioned.

To claim under these special rules, complete an Attendance Allowance claim form and get a separate completed form DS1500 from your doctor, specialist or consultant to send with it.

Care Needs

To get Attendance Allowance, your disability must be severe enough for you to need any of the following:

- help with things such as washing (and getting in or out of the bath or shower), dressing, eating, getting to and using the toilet, or communicating your needs
- supervision to avoid putting yourself or others in substantial danger, for example, needing someone to keep an eye on your medical condition or diet, or because you cannot control the way you behave
- someone with you when you are on dialysis

Disability Tests

Day time tests you reasonably require:

- frequent attention throughout the day in connection with bodily functions *or*
- continual supervision throughout the day to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others.

Night-time Tests you reasonably require:

- prolonged or repeated attention with bodily functions *or*
- to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others, you need another person to be awake for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals to watch over you.

Disability Tests – definitions

- **needs** - This is help that is reasonably needed, not what is given, nor what is medically essential. This is help to lead as normal a life as possible. This includes help you need outside your home. For example you can be given help to do your own shopping or to take part in "reasonable" social activities.
- **frequent** - Means more than twice.
- **attention** - This is help of an active nature required to be given in your physical presence. This can include help given to you to wash, dress or to go to the toilet. It can also be more indirect help such as signing, reading aloud or prompting and encouragement.
- **throughout** - This means spread over the day.
- **bodily functions** - These include hearing, eating, seeing, washing, reading, communicating, walking, drinking, sitting, sleeping, dressing or undressing, using the toilet, shaving, shampooing, help with medication and thinking.
- **continual** - Means regular checking but not non stop supervision; does not have to be constant.
- **supervision** - This is watching over, ready to intervene.
- **substantial danger** - The danger must be real, not just remotely possible.
- **prolonged** - Means some little time (at least 20 minutes).
- **repeated** - Means two or more times.
- **night** - This is when the household has closed down for the night. It is generally the time when an adult is in bed but must be more or less within nighttime hours - generally between the hours of 11pm and 7 am.
- **terminally ill** - You are terminally ill if you are suffering from a progressive disease where death can be expected within 6 months. Since 25 September 2006 an award made because you are terminally ill will be for a fixed period of three years. After that period it will be reviewed.

Attendance Allowance - rates and how to claim

There are two rates of Attendance Allowance depending on how your disability affects you:

The lower rate if you need help with personal care frequently or supervision continually throughout the day only, help with personal care or someone to watch over you during the night only, or someone with you when you are on dialysis

The higher rate if you frequently need help with personal care, or someone to supervise you continually throughout the day and also personal care or someone to watch over you during the night

You can get Attendance Allowance even if no one is actually giving you the care you need - even if you live alone. It is not affected by any other money savings or pension - you may have. You do not have to have paid any National Insurance contributions to get it and it is not taxable.

Claim straight away - if you delay you may lose benefit.

You can claim online or get a claim pack by:
phoning the

- Benefit Enquiry Line Telephone: 0800 88 22 00
- Claim online [http: www.dwp.gov.uk/eservice](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/eservice)

Call the Benefit Enquiry Line

This is a confidential freephone service for disabled people and carers. Call the Benefit Enquiry Line and ask them to send you a claim pack. They will send you the claim pack in an alternative format if required - for example, Braille.

They can also arrange for someone to help you fill out the form if required. Please note that the person you speak to may need to arrange for someone to phone you back.

Telephone: 0800 88 22 00

Textphone: 0800 24 33 55

The Benefit Enquiry Line is open from 8.30 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday and from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm on Saturday.

If you request a claim pack from the Benefit Enquiry Line, the date of your phone call will be treated as your date of claim from which Attendance Allowance can be paid, as long as you send your form back within six weeks of that date.

If you delay making a claim, you may lose out on benefit.

The person taking your call will not have your personal papers but will be able to give you general advice. This advice must not be taken as a decision about your claim.