



Benefits & Entitlements

CANCER SOCIETY - BRIEF FACTS

WORK AND INCOME – BENEFITS

If you or your family are affected by cancer, you may be able to receive some of the types of benefits which are listed here.

You should ask about any benefits or special circumstances you feel may entitle you to further payments. Ask the hospital social workers or staff at the local office of **Work and Income**.

WHO CAN GET INCOME SUPPORT?

If your illness is temporary
and you can't work

you may be able to get the Sickness Benefit

You must be over 18 years of age, and have been working so that you now have a loss of income.

If your illness is long-term

and you are permanently disabled or ill and can't work

you may be able to get Invalids Benefit.

The Invalids Benefit is paid to people who have a permanent sickness, injury or disability which stops them from working. The Invalids Benefit is paid at a higher rate than the Sickness Benefit. It is advisable to apply for a Sickness Benefit which can be granted quickly and then be transferred to the Invalids Benefit if eligible.

If you are

a sole parent, an older woman living alone, or caring for someone sick or infirmed,

you may be able to get Domestic Purposes Benefit.

To qualify for any of these types of income support

- ♦ you must be a legal resident of New Zealand when you apply. This means you normally live here and have been living here for at least a year before you apply (or longer in some cases).
- ♦ depends on your income and assets. Income means any money you or your partner get from work, investments, your own business, rent or boarders, or ACC payments. Assets mean anything you or your partner own which you can earn income from, such as savings, shares, stock, loans to others, or property (except your home).

EXTRA HELP

If you are on a low income, or already get one of the main types of income support, you may be able to get extra help. Most types of extra help depend on your income and assets and the costs involved.

Accommodation Supplement

The Accommodation Supplement helps towards rent, board, or the cost of owning a home. You only qualify if

your costs are over a certain amount and your income and assets under certain limits.

Disability Allowance

The Disability Allowance helps towards the extra ongoing costs you or your family have because of illness. It can help with costs like regular visits to the doctor or hospital, medicines, and extra clothes, travel, personal alarms, lawn mowing and gardening. You need to prove you have lived in New Zealand permanently and show medical proof that you have a disability.

Community Services Card

The Community Services Card gives you and your children cost reductions on doctors' fees and prescriptions. Most people who are on a benefit automatically get one of these cards. If you are on a low income you can also apply for one.

Family Support

Family support is cash help for families on a low income. It is usually paid by Work and Income if your main income is a benefit, but Inland Revenue pays it if your total income is more than \$20,000 a year before tax. The amount you get depends on how many children you have and their ages.

Special Benefit

This is paid to some people who do not have enough to meet ongoing essential expenses and whose circumstances warrant a payment being made.

NB For this benefit Work and Income needs to know you savings, everyday living expenses and fixed expenses.

ENTITLEMENTS OTHER THAN WORK AND INCOME

High User Card - GP

If you have 12 or more visits to your GP in a 12-month period for the same illness, you can get a High User Card through your GP. This gives you cheaper visits for subsequent treatment for the illness.

Prescription Card - Chemist

You can get a Prescription Card through your local pharmacies. This allows for families receiving more than 20 prescription items per year to get further prescriptions free (for holders of a Community Services Card) and for \$2.00 (for people without a Community Services Card). The exception is a part charge on non-subsidised drugs.

Travel Reimbursement - Hospital

You may be entitled to a reimbursement of your travel costs. This is dependent on distance and number of trips and, in some circumstances, a Community Services Card is required. Apply through your treatment centre.



QUERIES ABOUT BENEFITS AND ENTITLEMENTS

The hospital social workers, the oncology social workers at treatment centres, or your local office of Work and Income can help you with any queries you have about benefits and entitlements.

For in-patients, the hospital social workers can arrange a visit from Work & Income Liaison. Work & Income also provide a Home Visit Service to people who are sick.

The Cancer Society of New Zealand is a non-profit organisation whose mission is “to minimise the impact of cancer on our community”. The Cancer Society’s Support & Information Service assists people with cancer and family members through one-to-one counselling, support, educational programmes, such as LIVING WITH CANCER and CANSUPPORT, telephone contact, guidance, information and referrals to appropriate services. The Cancer Society also offers assistance with transport to treatment for those who require it, CANTALK newsletter and a specialist library and information service. There is a specialist nurse for patient information who can guide you - email: info@cancersoc.org.nz

Wellington Division - 52 Riddiford St, Newtown, Phone 04-389-8421 - Fax 04-389-5994

Web Site www.cancersoc.org.nz

- Kapiti Branch Phone 04-298-8914

- Nelson Centre Phone 03-546-3920

- Marlborough Centre Phone 03-579-4379

- Wairarapa Centre Phone 06-378-8039

