

Queensland Health

# **Guidelines for Queensland HME Subsidy Scheme for Laryngectomy**



**Queensland  
Government**

## Guidelines for Queensland HME Subsidy Scheme for Laryngectomy

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### For more information contact:

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme, Metro South Health, Queensland Health, PO Box 281, Cannon Hill QLD 4170, email [mass@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:mass@health.qld.gov.au), phone (07) 3136 3636.

An electronic version of this document is available at [health.qld.gov.au/mass](https://health.qld.gov.au/mass)

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# Introduction

Heat and Moisture Exchange (HME) devices are consumables that provide a means of warming, filtering and humidifying inhaled air for patients following laryngectomy. They are included in the group of items referred to as laryngectomy respiratory consumables.

The Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) is responsible for the management and administration of the *Queensland HME Subsidy Scheme for Laryngectomy* (QHSSL). These guidelines have been developed in consultation with speech pathologists, otolaryngologists, consumers and representatives from MASS and the Department of Health.

## Glossary

Term	Definition
Applicant	Any person applying for provision of laryngectomy respiratory consumables under the scheme
Prescriber – speech pathologists/ otolaryngologists	Undertakes initial assessment and ongoing clinical review of the applicant in order to prescribe the most clinically appropriate laryngectomy respiratory consumables
QHSSL	Refers to the Queensland HME Subsidy Scheme for Laryngectomy

## Privacy Statement

Queensland Health is collecting administrative, demographic and clinical data as part of the MASS and QHSSL application processes, in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009* and *Health Services Act 1991*, in order to assess the applicant's eligibility for funding assistance for the supply of aids and equipment.

The information will only be accessed by Queensland Health officers. Some of this information may be given to the applicant's carer or guardian; other government departments who provide associated services; the prescribing health professional for further clinical management purposes; and to those parties (e.g. commercial suppliers, community care and repairers) requiring the information for the purpose of providing aids, equipment and services.

The applicant's information will not be given to any other person or organisation except where required by law. If the information provided in the application is not complete or accurate, MASS may not be able to properly assess the application.

If any details change, or if the applicant finds the personal information MASS holds is inaccurate, the applicant must contact MASS and reasonable steps will be taken by MASS to ensure the information is corrected.

Queensland Health has a long-standing commitment to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of personal information collected by the department. That commitment is supported by nine *National Privacy Principles in the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)* ([legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2009-014](http://legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2009-014)) (in relation to all personal information held by the department) and strict confidentiality obligations found in Part 7 of the *Health Services Act 1991 (Qld)* ([legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/H/HealthServA91.pdf](http://legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/H/HealthServA91.pdf)) in relation to health information held by the department.

## QHSSL Contact Details

Contact	Details
Address	41 Southgate Avenue Cannon Hill QLD 4170
Postal address	PO Box 281 Cannon Hill QLD 4170
Phone	(07) 3136 3510
Email	<a href="mailto:MASS-Oxygen@health.qld.gov.au">MASS-Oxygen@health.qld.gov.au</a>

## Aim of QHSSL

QHSSL provides people who have undergone laryngectomy surgery with subsidised access to HME consumable devices to enhance pulmonary and respiratory function, voicing and quality of life. All eligible applicants to the scheme will be assessed through an equitable process based on clinical need. These guidelines have been developed to provide quality, consistency and standardisation in the administration of QHSSL.

# Eligibility

Eligibility is determined by both administrative and clinical criteria.

## Administrative Eligibility

To be administratively eligible for assistance from QHSSL, the applicant:

- Must be a permanent resident of Queensland and hold a current Medicare Card (in the name of the applicant); or
- Must reside in Queensland and hold a Permanent Protection Visa, Humanitarian Visa or be an asylum seeker.

## Clinical Eligibility

In addition to meeting administrative eligibility and to be clinically eligible for assistance from QHSSL, the applicant must also have:

- Undergone a surgical procedure for laryngectomy; and
- Completed an appropriate trial of laryngectomy respiratory consumables for a minimum of 4-weeks; or
- Provided evidence (e.g. receipts, clinician statement) that the applicant is currently using laryngectomy respiratory consumables; or
- Successfully trialed in the last 12 months but not used laryngectomy respiratory consumables due to lack of affordability.
- Note: The laryngectomy respiratory consumables used during these trials are not funded through QHSSL.

## Ineligibility

The applicant is not eligible for assistance from QHSSL under the following circumstances:

- They are eligible to receive assistance for laryngectomy respiratory consumables under one or more State or Commonwealth Government-funded programs:
  - WorkCover
  - Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) Gold Card holders
  - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)  
Note: QHSSL will fund the gap between the cost of the consumable/s and NDIS funding.
  - National Injury Insurance Scheme (NIIS).
- Hospital in-patients – public or private where the admission is related to their laryngectomy procedure.
- The cost of laryngectomy respiratory consumables can be claimed through a private health insurance policy.

- Note: QHSSL will fund the gap between the cost of the consumable/s and private health insurance refund.
- Within the 4-week trial period where the provision of laryngectomy respiratory consumables is related to the hospital admission.

Note: Applicants may be eligible for QHSSL once eligibility under another government-funded source/program or other entitlement is exhausted or discontinued.

## Ongoing Eligibility

An applicant must continue to meet eligibility requirements to receive on-going funding assistance and is responsible for advising their eligible prescriber and QHSSL of any change to:

- Eligibility status e.g. changes in entitlement to receive compensation from any source for their laryngectomy.
- Contact details and/or address including if they move interstate or overseas.
- Note: When an applicant moves interstate or overseas, or no longer meets the eligibility criteria for the scheme, they will no longer be eligible for further assistance through QHSSL.
- Nominated contact person's details.
- Physical condition such as change or decrease in functional or cognitive ability impeding the safe use of the items supplied.

## Clinical Review

In order to meet clinical eligibility requirements for ongoing support through QHSSL, applicants are required to undergo a minimum 12-month clinical review with an eligible prescriber.

This will help to determine whether the applicant's laryngectomy respiratory consumable requirements have changed in order that the prescription and application for the next delivery can be either confirmed or amended accordingly.

In some cases, clinical review may require an additional 4-week trial using different laryngectomy respiratory consumables.

# Availability and supply

## In scope consumables

Approved applicants are eligible for approved respiratory/HME consumables per applicant per year (12 months), commencing from when the first application for that year is lodged with MASS.

Consumable Item	Definition
HME cassette	730/year HME cassettes
Foam stoma cover	730/year foam stoma covers
Cloth stoma cover	12 boxes/year OR 12 individual/year
Tracheostoma button	3 buttons or tubes/year
Laryngectomy tube or button	
Standard adhesive/attachments	365 standard adhesives/year
Hands-free device	1 every 3 years
Securing device for tracheostoma button or laryngectomy tube e.g. neck strap or LaryClip	12 boxes/year OR 12 individual/year
Skin care (i.e. skin preparation and adhesive removal products)	14 boxes/year
Silicone glue	4/year
Shower Aid	1/year

## Product List

A product list is included in the online application ([MASS-eApply](#)) to guide selection of the most appropriate laryngectomy respiratory consumables. This list will be reviewed annually by the QHSSL working group.

Applications for products not currently listed can be directed to [MASS-Oxygen@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MASS-Oxygen@health.qld.gov.au). These requests will be reviewed by the QHSSL working group and where appropriate, added to the list.

## Out of scope consumables

QHSSL does not provide:

- voice prostheses and plug inserts
- tracheostomy tubes and tracheostomy-specific respiratory consumables
- nebuliser equipment
- lubricant
- cleaning brushes.

## Retrospective or reimbursement of funding

QHSSL will **not** reimburse or fund any costs associated with laryngectomy respiratory consumables that the applicant may have committed to, either before or after their application has been submitted, regardless of their eligibility to the scheme.

QHSSL will **not** provide funds retrospectively for laryngectomy respiratory consumables purchased prior to approval of their application.

## Application process

QHSSL operates through a prescriber model where prescribers complete a prescription for the applicant's laryngectomy respiratory consumables and submit an application on behalf of the applicant to QHSSL for processing pending availability of sufficient funds within the applicant's annual allocation.

## Eligible prescribers

Eligible prescribers for QHSSL include:

- Otolaryngologists registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- Speech pathologists with a minimum three years of experience in working with laryngectomy care and eligible for certified practising membership with Speech Pathology Australia (SPA).
- Speech pathologists with less than three years' clinical experience eligible for certified practising membership with SPA in consultation with an eligible speech pathology prescriber or otolaryngologist.

## Prescriber responsibilities

- Knowledge of the QHSSL guidelines.
- Provide initial education to the applicant/carer regarding QHSSL and the process for application and supply.
- Confirm the applicant's eligibility for funded laryngectomy respiratory consumables prior to submitting an application:
  - Verification of residency, Medicare Card and Visa details – where applicable.

- Confirm the applicant does not have other sources of funding (as per eligibility criteria) available to be used for laryngectomy respiratory consumables.
- Undertake assessment of an applicant’s clinical eligibility and need, and in conjunction with the applicant, prescribe the most appropriate laryngectomy respiratory consumable products available through the scheme, to meet their needs.
- Establish that the applicant/carer has the cognitive, physical and psychological ability to use the item/s effectively.
- Ensure training is provided to the applicant/carer in the appropriate safe use of their laryngectomy respiratory consumables.
- Submit a completed online application via MASS-eApply including specifications for the most appropriate and cost-effective laryngectomy respiratory consumable/s and preferred supplier/s to QHSSL. Prescribers and applicants will be required to register before using MASS-eApply for the first time. Registration and login information are available on the [MASS-eApply website](#).
- Re-assess the applicant when notified of a change in their cognitive, physical and psychological ability to ensure they can continue to use the prescribed item/s.
- Undertake an annual clinical review of the applicant to confirm the applicant’s ongoing laryngectomy respiratory consumable requirements.
- Contact MASS if error in application/order submitted.
- Contact MASS if applicant receives incorrect item(s).
- Monitor applicant’s expenditure/usage. When funding/allocation exceeded and where applicable, submit an exemption request to QHSSL.

## Supply Schedule

Supply	Schedule
New laryngectomees/new HME users	Initial order – 3-month supply Second order – 3-month supply Third and subsequent orders – 6-month supply
Existing laryngectomees who currently use HME devices	Initial order – up to 6-month supply Second and subsequent orders – up to 6-month supply

Note: The supply schedule is subject to amendment where the applicant’s requirements change, in consultation with the prescriber.

## Application and supply process

- Upon receipt of an application QHSSL will:
  - Acknowledge all applications via MASS-eApply to the prescriber upon receipt of their application.

- Determine the availability of sufficient funds to process the application and where relevant, inform the prescriber that the maximum level of funding has been reached and/or allocation exceeded.
- Where sufficient funds are available, coordinate the provision of laryngectomy respiratory consumable items between all parties.
- Ensure the item/s are delivered as per the prescriber’s instructions.  
Note: Orders can be delivered to the prescribing clinician’s work address if preferred.
- Where insufficient funds are available, the applicant will be required to self-fund their laryngectomy respiratory consumables by purchasing directly from the supplier.
- Subsequent applications will need to be submitted to QHSSL where an amendment to the existing prescription is indicated.

## Client feedback, complaints and appeals

### Complaints regarding QHSSL

QHSSL recognises that consumer feedback, both positive and negative, is essential in order to provide a quality service that meets the needs of our consumers. Compliments and complaints can be made both verbally and in writing or by using the forms as detailed below.

Consumers such as applicants and prescribers are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the service, they have received from QHSSL and the contractor supplying the laryngectomy respiratory consumables.

Feedback can assist in resolving specific issues of concern. It also assists QHSSL to identify areas where there is an opportunity to improve the services provided. QHSSL will treat all complainants with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality. Complainants will not be subjected to any prejudicial treatment as a result of making a complaint about the standard of service received.

The consumer’s privacy is protected in accordance with the QHSSL Privacy Statement and Information Standard 42A (IS42A). QHSSL is committed to maintaining strict confidentiality in respect of information provided to it and will not divulge such information without consent of the consumer.

QHSSL will endeavour to provide feedback to the complainant on the progress of their complaint at regular intervals throughout the complaint management process.

### Compliments and complaints mechanism

To assist the process, consumers are encouraged to provide factual and full information regarding their concerns. The compliments and complaints management process generally depend on the nature of the issue as follows:

- Issues concerning the performance of QHSSL while providing the QHSSL service.

These types of issues are investigated and resolved where possible at the local QHSSL level.

- Issues concerning the outcome of an application to QHSSL.

These types of issues are reviewed by QHSSL working group/ MASS administrative, clinical and management personnel, and if necessary, with advice from expert clinicians who have a holistic knowledge of QHSSL client population, procedures, and services delivered. The aim is to objectively review the issues of concern relative to QHSSL providing an equitable and consistent service to all applicants within the scope of service provision.

Complaints that cannot be resolved at the local level are referred to the Director of MASS for consideration.

Compliments and complaints can be forwarded via email to [MASS-Oxygen@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MASS-Oxygen@health.qld.gov.au).