

# At the rehabilitation hospital



2

TAC information for  
people with major injuries

# About at the rehabilitation hospital

This brochure provides basic information about the support services funded by the TAC for people who have sustained major injuries as a result of a transport accident, and their families.

Major injuries are defined as: spinal cord injuries such as quadriplegia or paraplegia; moderate or severe acquired brain injuries; extensive burns; and/or amputations.

If you would like more detailed information about support services, please contact your TAC Early Support Coordinator or the TAC on 1300 654 329.

For information about the TAC in your own language, call one of the numbers listed on the back of this booklet.



1300 654 329



[www.tac.vic.gov.au](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au)



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Rehabilitation can involve a range of therapies that focus on improving your health and independence.



# Getting information and support

**When you move to a rehabilitation hospital, you may be unsure about the steps that are ahead. You may be dealing with the shock of your accident and be worried about your health and future. During this time your TAC Early Support Coordinator and the health professionals at the hospital will be there to help you.**

The health professionals will monitor your progress and talk to you about the steps you need to follow. They will work with you to develop a rehabilitation program. It is important that you take an active part in this process so you understand as much as possible about your injuries and the rehabilitation program you are undertaking.

They will also work with you and the Early Support Coordinator to plan your safe discharge from hospital.

Remember, your Early Support Coordinator is your key point of contact at the TAC and will be there for you throughout this challenging phase of your journey.

Don't hesitate to ask the hospital staff or your Early Support Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

## What is rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation is the process of helping you back to your highest level of functioning following injury. Through relearning and retraining, you can acquire the skills to live as independent a lifestyle as possible.

Your rehabilitation may have different stages and may take place over an extended period of time. This is the first stage of your rehabilitation.

When you arrive at the rehabilitation hospital, a team of health professionals will look at how well you manage day-to-day functions integral to your lifestyle. Depending on your injuries, they will assess such things as your capacity to move around safely or your ability to remember things and express yourself. They will work with you to develop an appropriate treatment program that caters to your individual needs, abilities and preferences. This can involve a range of therapies. Their focus will be on improving your health and independence and getting you to the point where you can leave the hospital and continue rehabilitation in your day-to-day life.

It is important that you discuss your progress with the health professionals and your appointed Early Support Coordinator. You may wish to organise a team meeting to give you and your family, where appropriate, the opportunity to talk about how you are progressing and to provide input into your rehabilitation program.

**“You play the most important role in your rehabilitation. You can take an active role in the process by discussing your injuries and treatment with the health professionals at the hospital.”**

Gavin Williams, Physiotherapist

We aim to develop a good working relationship with you, your family and the health professionals involved in your treatment and support, as working together is vital to ensure appropriate plans are in place to support you.

## How the TAC can help

The TAC funds support services for people injured in transport accidents. These services include paying for appropriate medical, rehabilitation and disability services provided by qualified health professionals and service providers.

**For more detail on these services, please refer to our brochure *Supporting you after a transport accident* or visit our website at [www.tac.vic.gov.au](http://www.tac.vic.gov.au)**

The TAC's ability to fund support services is dependent on legislation (*Transport Accident Act, 1986*), your needs (as determined by a qualified health professional) and the relationship between these needs and your accident injuries.

Your Early Support Coordinator will work with you and your health professional team to plan your safe discharge from hospital. This is very important because it will ensure you have supports and services in place when you return home.

Your Early Support Coordinator will also talk to you about the different support options that may suit your needs when you return home. For example, you may need help travelling to your local doctor's office when you return home. Do you need support or training to use public transport? Do you need help to return to the workforce? Thinking about issues such as this can help you plan your return to day-to-day life.

Based on these discussions, and if you feel ready, your Early Support Coordinator may begin to develop an Independence Plan with you.

## Your Independence Plan

An Independence Plan is your own individual plan that represents the short and long term goals you want to achieve when you leave the hospital setting. It maps your journey to independence. It will list the goals you want to achieve at home, at work/study and in the community. It will also capture all your goals, no matter how big or small – whether it's going to the movies with friends, managing housework or rejoining the workforce. Most importantly, it will detail the necessary steps and the key people involved to achieve these goals. The aim is to meet these goals with the support of the TAC and allocated health professionals, and most importantly, with involvement from you.

### The things you may need to consider include:

- Managing household and day-to-day tasks
- Caring for your children
- Treatment
- Your social life
- Activities you enjoy
- New interests you may have
- Work or study
- Travel arrangements
- Modifications to your home or vehicle

### The things your Independence Plan will include are:

- Key contact people
- Summary of your goals in the home, at work, within the community
- How your goals and sub-goals will be achieved
- Dates for goals and sub-goals to be achieved
- Services that need to be provided like physiotherapy, home care
- Work and educational arrangements
- Community, sporting and hobby activities



Sam Richards acquired a brain injury in a transport accident in 2003. Since then, he has worked hard to regain some independence. Today his journey to independence continues with the support of his treating provider team and the TAC. Sam lives in a unit behind his mother's house and wants to be an actor one day.

With time your needs will change and so will your Independence Plan. Your Early Support Coordinator will keep a close eye on your progress and when you or they feel it is time, your plan will be reassessed. With both you and your Early Support Coordinator monitoring how and if your goals are being achieved, the right services and support will be provided to you at the right time.

Remember, the plan relies heavily on your input, so although it may be early in your journey it's important to start thinking about the goals you would like to achieve in the short and longer term.

Don't hesitate to speak to your Early Support Coordinator for more information on your Independence Plan. Together you will decide the best time to start working on it – whether it is now or in several weeks or months.

Their aim is to develop a good working relationship with you, your family and the health professionals involved in your treatment and support, as working together is vital to ensure appropriate plans are in place to support you. By working together you will be able to maximise your independence.

## Support for friends and family

Your relatives and friends may also need support after your accident. Hospital social workers can advise you on how to obtain this type of assistance. You can ask a nurse or other hospital staff members for an appointment with a social worker or for a referral to an outside agency.

**There are several organisations that can help and many of their services are free. (Ask for our information sheet on *Community Services*).**

The Road Trauma Support Services, for example, provides counselling referral and information to families affected by road trauma. The number is 1300 367 797.

The parents, partner, siblings and children of an injured person may be eligible to receive TAC-funded counselling from a doctor, psychologist or qualified social worker. If you would like more information about counselling, please speak to your Early Support Coordinator.

# What happens next

## Returning to day-to-day life

The following outlines what you can expect to happen throughout your rehabilitation and move back to day-to-day life.

	What happens at the hospital	What happens at the TAC
<b>Stage 1: The emergency hospital</b>	Immediately after the accident emergency treatment is given.	Ambulance and hospital bills are paid. You are assigned an Early Support Coordinator who will look after you and manage your claim.
<b>Stage 2: The rehabilitation hospital</b>	The health professionals work out the treatment you need and together with you, plan your rehabilitation program. You, your Early Support Coordinator, family and the health professionals make plans to ensure your adjustment to day-to-day life is as smooth as possible.	In consultation with you and your treating team, your Early Support Coordinator will develop a discharge plan to ensure the right supports are in place when you return home. They will pay for services and offer options appropriate to your needs and begin discussing your Independence Plan with you.
<b>Stage 3: Returning to day-to-day life</b>	You leave the hospital and move back into day-to-day life with the right services in place to support you.	We continue to pay for services and offer options appropriate to your needs. The Independence Plan is regularly reviewed to match your goals.

## What to do if you have a problem

If you are concerned about any aspect of service provided at the hospital, you can speak to the social worker, your Early Support Coordinator or patient advocate about your concerns.

If you are concerned about a TAC decision or you have a complaint, we encourage you to speak directly to your Early Support Coordinator, who will be happy to discuss your concerns with you. In most cases, issues can be resolved at this point.

**If you are still concerned, there are a number of options available to you. Call the TAC for more information. Our contact details are listed on the back of this booklet.**

## Preparing to return to day-to-day life

As your rehabilitation program progresses, you will gradually take charge of your life again and be actively involved in plans for the future. Your Early Support Coordinator and the health professionals will work with you to plan and prepare for your move back to day-to-day life.

The TAC will also continue to support you when you return to your day-to-day life. Your Early Support Coordinator will work with you, your family and the health professionals to respond to your goals and needs for the short and longer-term. You need to think about what is important to you and what options you might like to pursue so your Early Support Coordinator can capture this in your Independence Plan.

We realise that each person has different ideas about leaving their rehabilitation hospital and moving back to day-to-day life. Many of our clients tell us that this is a big adjustment with both 'ups and downs'. Your family and friends will play an important role in helping you make this adjustment smoothly.



## An Early Support Coordinator:

- Is your key point of contact at the TAC
- Meets face to face with you, your family and the health professionals concerned throughout the journey from hospital to home
- Manages your claim by making decisions on requests for treatment and services
- Ensures the right supports and services are in place when you leave hospital and go home
- Works closely with you to develop an Independence Plan, that captures your goals at home, at work and in the community
- Details the necessary steps to achieve these goals in the Independence Plan
- Shares the Independence Plan with the relevant health professionals to ensure that everyone involved in your care is working towards helping you achieve your goals
- Regularly monitors your Independence Plan to ensure it matches your changing goals and needs
- Supports you on your journey to independence
- Is there to help address any questions, concerns or fears you may have

## What you need to do

You play the most important role in your recovery.

### You need to ensure that you:

- Discuss your injuries and treatment with the health professionals at the hospital and understand the process of rehabilitation
- Are actively involved with your Early Support Coordinator and the health professionals in arranging an appropriate rehabilitation plan that suits your needs and type of injury
- Actively participate in your rehabilitation program
- Start talking with your Early Support Coordinator and treating health professionals about a discharge plan and the support you may need at home. If you're ready, begin discussing and developing your Independence Plan together
- Read the brochure *Supporting you after a transport accident* and talk to your Early Support Coordinator about support services that may be appropriate to your situation
- Contact Your Early Support Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns

**Please contact your Early Support Coordinator if you have questions or concerns. Your Early Support Coordinator will be happy to visit you to discuss things in more detail and to provide you with relevant booklets or information sheets.**

## Contact us

8.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday



**1300 654 329** (local call)

**1800 332 556** (toll-free outside the Melbourne metropolitan area)



### Address

60 Brougham Street, Geelong VIC 3220



### Mailing address

TAC, Reply Paid 2751, Melbourne VIC 3001



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For information about the TAC in your own language, call one of the numbers listed here:

العربية

1300 138 639

Ελληνικά

1300 138 642

廣東話

1300 138 640

Türkçe

1300 139 073

Polski

1300 139 072

Hrvatski

1300 138 641

Tiếng Việt

1300 139 074

English

1300 139 076

Italiano

1300 138 643

All other languages

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普通话

1300 139 071

