

Getting a Wheelchair or Scooter

Outpatient Occupational Therapy
Nova Scotia Rehabilitation and Arthritis Centre

Getting a Wheelchair or Scooter

How can Occupational Therapy Services help me?

The occupational therapist (OT) will:

- Work with you, your health care team members, your medical supplier, and your source of funding to review, prescribe, and choose a wheelchair or scooter.
- Help you apply for funds to help with the cost of your wheelchair or scooter.
- Teach you how to use your wheelchair or scooter safely.

What can I expect?

It may take many months to get a wheelchair or scooter. You may have to rent a wheelchair or scooter while you are waiting.

Appointment type: Assessment (review of your needs)

How long will it take?

1 to 2 hours

Why do I need it?

To review your needs and what features you will need in a wheelchair or scooter.

What will happen?

- An OT will ask you questions about how you use or plan to use your wheelchair or scooter.
- You will have a physical exam while lying down, sitting on a mat, and seated in a wheelchair or scooter (if you have one).
- The OT will measure you and the wheelchair or scooter you are using now (if you have one).

What should I bring?

- The wheelchair or scooter you use the most (if you have one).
- Tools you use (like a lap tray, or a tool that helps you talk to others, like a special keyboard).
- Your support person or family member (if someone helps you at home).
- A list of problems with your wheelchair or scooter and a list of ideas that you think could help.
- A sling for moving into or out of your wheelchair (if you use a lift).
- Information about your private health insurance plan, if you have one.
- If you are being helped by the Department of Community Services (DCS), bring your DCS worker's name and phone number.
- If you are being helped by Continuing Care (CC), bring your CC coordinator's name and phone number.

What will I need to do?

- Choose a medical supplier to help you buy your wheelchair or scooter.
- If you are paying through a funding organization or your private insurance, they may ask for quotes from more than one medical supplier.
- Give your consent (sign your name to say it is OK) for the OT to give your information (like your name and measurements) to your chosen medical supplier.

What will happen when the meeting is over?

The OT will look at the information they collected and order equipment for you to try.

Appointment type: Trial

How long will it take?

60 minutes (1 hour)

Why do I need it?

To try out a wheelchair or scooter that is close to what is right for you.

What will happen?

The OT and your medical supplier will set up equipment for you to try.

What should I bring?

A sling for moving into or out of your wheelchair (if you use a lift).

What will I need to do?

- Try out the wheelchair or scooter.
- Give feedback on what you like and do not like about the wheelchair or scooter and any parts.
- You may need more than one appointment for the trial. Please be patient.

What will happen when the meeting is over?

Trying out different wheelchairs or scooters will let you see which features you like the most, and which features are the most helpful.

Appointment type: Completing your wheelchair or scooter prescription

How long will it take?

1 to 1½ hours

Why do I need it?

To fill out the order form(s) and/or rental papers for your wheelchair or scooter.

What will happen?

- The OT and your medical supplier will help you fill out the order forms.
- It often takes weeks to get a wheelchair or scooter. You may need to rent a wheelchair or scooter until your new one arrives.
- By this point, you and the OT should know if you can get any funding.

What should I bring?

A list of what you liked and did not like about the wheelchairs or scooters you tried.

What will happen when the meeting is over?

- You will have a prescription for your wheelchair or scooter.
- Your rental wheelchair or scooter will be ordered, if needed.

Appointment type: Wheelchair or scooter set-up

How long will it take?

30 minutes to 4 hours

Why do I need it?

To set up your wheelchair or scooter.

What will happen?

- The OT and your medical supplier will set up your rental or permanent wheelchair or scooter.
- The OT and your medical supplier will teach you how to use your wheelchair or scooter safely.
- They will adjust the wheelchair or scooter parts (backrest, cushion, legrests) as needed.
- This appointment will be short, unless many changes are needed.

What should I bring?

- Any questions you have about your wheelchair or scooter or how to set it up.
- Any support person(s) who will need to learn how to use your wheelchair or scooter.

What will I need to do?

Sign paperwork to say that you were given or rented a wheelchair or scooter.

What will happen when the meeting is over?

- You will leave with your wheelchair or scooter, unless other adjustments or changes need to be made.
- If more changes are needed, you will need another appointment before you can take your wheelchair or scooter home.

Appointment type: Wheelchair skills training

How long will it take?

- 30 minutes to 1 hour
- The number of sessions will depend on your goals and skill level.

What is it?

You will have the chance to have wheelchair skills training sessions, if you are interested.

What will happen?

You will learn how to safely get around your environment. You will learn how to get around obstacles or barriers (like ramps, curbs, gravel) while using your wheelchair or scooter.

Do I have to pay for Occupational Therapy Services to help me get a wheelchair or scooter?

- **You do not have to pay for Occupational Therapy Services to help you.**
- You do have to pay for materials used to customize your wheelchair or scooter (like special hand grips).

Do I have to pay to get a wheelchair or scooter?

Yes. Wheelchairs and scooters are bought or rented through your medical supplier. How much you have to pay will depend on what features you need, and how much coverage is available to you through your public or private insurance plan. You may have to pay up front and then be reimbursed (paid back).

- › Your private insurance plan may pay for your wheelchair or scooter.
- › You may be able to apply for financial support through a funding program.
- › You may be able to apply to a provincial wheelchair loan program. If you give your consent, your health care team can help you get more information.
- › Your medical supplier will give you quotes for the cost of the wheelchair or scooter.

What do I do if my wheelchair or scooter needs maintenance and/or repair?

- Call your medical supplier. All maintenance and/or repair for your wheelchair or scooter is done by your medical supplier.
- You may have to pay for some maintenance and/or repairs that are not covered by your funding source.

Occupational Therapy Services

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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