

International Day of People with Disability – Inclusion matters

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The Health Column

Disability covers many areas and often the term is misunderstood. 'Disability' is an umbrella term covering impairments and activity limitations. A person may also be seen to be 'with disability' if he or she has had impairment in the past, or based on a personal or group standard or norm. One in five, or more than 4 million, Australians have a physical or mental disability. One in three people either have a disability or are close to someone who has a disability.



Disabilities range from relatively minor to severe. Approximately 3.4 million Australians have a physical disability, while more than 700,000 Australians have an intellectual impairment. One in six Australians is affected by hearing loss, while Vision Australia (the leading national provider of blindness and low vision services in Australia) estimates there are currently 357,000 people in Australia who are blind or have low vision.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports people with a permanent and significant disability that affects their ability to take part in everyday activities. The NDIS is currently being trialled in seven locations across Australia and will be rolled out nationally from 2016. The scheme seeks to focus on early intervention and aims to empower people with disability, and their carers, to identify and access support that will help achieve goals such as independence, involvement in the community, education, employment and health and wellbeing.

The aim of the NDIS is to support people with disability. However, there is an increasing understanding that supporting carers is also important. While carers cannot join the NDIS they can be involved in the assessment and planning for the people they care for, and there are supports through the NDIS which can help carers, either directly or indirectly, in their caring role.

The United Nations (UN) is a major driver of the recognition of equality for people with disability. The International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is a UN initiative that aims to promote an understanding of people with disability and encourage support for their dignity, rights and wellbeing. This day is observed annually, on 3 December, and has been promoted by the UN since 1992. The day focuses on a different issue each year, with the 2015 theme being 'Inclusion matters: access and empowerment for people of all abilities.' This year there are three sub-themes:

1. Making cities inclusive and accessible for all.
2. Improving disability data and statistics.
3. Including people with invisible disabilities in society and development.

The International Day of People with Disability is unique among community awareness days. It unites disability organisations, businesses, federal, state and local governments and the community. The day is a collaborative effort to celebrate and acknowledge the experience and expertise of people with disability.

Your local pharmacy is your health destination. There are many products and services your pharmacy can offer to people with disabilities. These include mobility aids, compression garments, medicine management services and home delivery. If you live with disability, or if you care for someone who does, visit your local pharmacy and find out what they can offer.

Carers play a huge role in supporting people with disability to lead fulfilling lives. These carers also need support. To meet the need for more information about how we can better take care of carers, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), with assistance from Centrelink and the Carers Association, has developed a Fact Card titled *Carer Support*. This Fact Card is available from all pharmacies providing the PSA's Self Care health information.

For the nearest Self Care pharmacy location phone the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia on 1300 369 772, or go to www.psa.org.au 'Supporting practice' then 'Self Care', and then 'Find a Self Care pharmacy'.