

Lesson 1: Introduction

In emergencies there is often a sudden increase in injuries, destruction of the environment and people may need to leave their homes (displaced population). It is important that all people can access a safe place and essential health services in an emergency.

Assistive technology

Assistive technology is broader than just assistive products. It is a term that includes the policies, systems and services needed to make sure people can access and safely use the assistive products they require.

Access to assistive products

Assistive products need to be available with medicines and other medical supplies in emergency situations. They are essential to the safety and health of people who are injured and/or displaced.




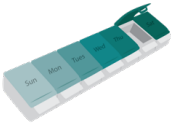


Assistive products can enable:

- Travel to safety
- Access to food, water, shelter, and services
- Greater independence and less need of caregiver support.

Types of assistive products

There are different types of assistive products that can assist people to do different tasks.

Examples of assistive products and their type include:

Mobility	Self care	Communication	Cognition	Vision	Hearing
					
Elbow crutches	Toilet chair	Communication board	Pill organizer	Magnifier	Hearing aid

Who uses assistive products in emergencies?

People of all ages need assistive products in emergencies. This includes older people, persons with disabilities, people with injuries and people with long term health conditions such as diabetes.

- **Temporary** assistive products user: A person with a short term need for assistive products. This may be due to injury, surgery, or an illness.
- **Long term** assistive products user: A person with an ongoing health problem requiring assistive products for a long time. They may use the assistive products all the time or only for a few hours a day.

Lesson 2: Preparing for assistive products to be provided in emergencies

Good planning and preparation in case of emergency can save lives.

- Assistive products should be provided within existing health services where possible.

- Access to assistive products may have been limited before the emergency. Personnel may need training to build their knowledge and skills to provide products.
- Training in Assistive Products (TAP) modules can be used to train emergency personnel to safely provide assistive products. TAP can be used by service providers, people who use assistive products and the wider community.

Selecting and storing assistive products for emergencies

Before an emergency:

- Suitable products and suppliers should be identified before an emergency to support rapid supply of products.
- A stock of priority assistive products can be stored with other essential health items for immediate use. This is important for areas at high risk of emergency.

There is a limit to how long assistive products can be stored. The quality and performance of materials deteriorates over time. This is particularly true in high or low temperatures. Ask suppliers how long products can be stored and stay safe for use (shelf life).

Suitable assistive products for emergencies

WHO has prepared model lists of priority assistive products for immediate response. This is to support people who need assistive products in emergencies.

AT6	AT10
<p>Six priority products for trauma emergency surgical care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority assistive products that can support essential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mobility after injury or surgery ○ Self care including management of continence. • For people who are ventilated after surgery, communication assistive products may support a person to communicate their needs and emotions. • The AT6 handbook provides guidance for trauma facility staff on how to provide these six assistive products to their patients. 	<p>Ten priority products for supporting the needs of internally displaced people and/or refugees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes mobility and self care products that can be adapted to your local population's needs and context. • A wider range of assistive products should be considered for people with more long-term needs.

The [WHO Assistive Product Specifications \(APS\)](#) is a document that can help you select suitable assistive products. It describes the minimum requirements needed for assistive products to be safe and effective and includes information on priority spare parts.

Always check how long delivery will take with potential suppliers.

Transporting and storing products

- Assistive products such as wheelchairs and walking aids are large. Some products may be easier to transport and store in parts. They can be quickly assembled at the service.
- Identifying a central location for all medical supplies will make moving assistive products between services simpler. Consider space for sorting and packing at this location.

Lesson 3: Providing assistive products in emergencies

Service models in emergencies

Services are required to provide suitable assistive products. When planning service models:

- Work with people in the community to identify, refer and follow up people who require assistive products. People with assistive product needs may be hidden.
- Use the TAP four steps of service provision:
 1. Select the product that best meets the person's needs
 2. Adjust and fit the product to the person
 3. Teach the person how to use and look after their product
 4. Follow up, including reviewing the person's needs and basic product repair and maintenance.

Lesson 4: Follow up

People may move around a lot in an emergency. Always ask for more than one set of contact details and share information on how to contact the service.