



# Are You Having Trouble Using the Phone?

**Telstra has a range of products and services to assist people with disabilities to use the telephone.**

**Find out about the full range by:**

- **visiting Telstra's website,**  
**[www.telstra.com.au/disability](http://www.telstra.com.au/disability)**
- **telephoning the Telstra Disability Enquiry**  
**Hotline on 1800 068 424.**

## Big Button Phones

If you have difficulty holding a telephone handset, reading or dialing the numbers on your telephone, Telstra can provide a Big Button Phone. The phone is available at no additional cost to standard phone rental via its Disability Equipment Program. The buttons are double the size of those on a standard phone, and can activate the hands-free function and dial programmed numbers with a single push of a button.



Another convenient option is a cordless phone. Telstra's cordless phone is designed for people with sensory loss. It has large backlit key-pad buttons, adjustable ring volume and adjustable hearing volume control, an in-built hearing aid coupler, hands-free ability and enables you to store 100 phone numbers. A cordless phone is also useful if you have difficulty getting to the phone.

If you're after an easy to use mobile phone, there are models available that have large buttons and a large display. The Telstra EasyCall 2 also has audible key tones so you can hear the numbers you are typing and make sure you're dialling the right number. It can be bought from a Telstra shop, from Telstra online or from a Telstra dealer, for approximately \$79.

## Tips for Using Your Standard Phone

Many people with vision impairment are still able to use a standard phone and here are some tips to assist:

- Locate the little **raised 'pip'** on the key for the digit 5 on the phone's keypad, and use this as a guide for the fingers. This way, you can type in the numbers. All handsets in Australia are required to have this pip and all handsets have the same number layout.
- Use the **memory functions** in the phone to key in frequently dialled numbers. Once stored, the number can be retrieved simply by pressing a single key (ask family or friends to help).
- If you can no longer see the tiny print in the telephone book, make use of your telephone provider's **Directory Assistance** service such as Telstra's 1223 service.

A recording will ask you to provide details and the system will try to automatically retrieve the number for you. If the system cannot automatically retrieve the number, you will be put through to an operator who can find the number for you and read it out to you. This service is free from a Telstra home phone, but if you then ask the operator to connect you, there is a fee of 99 cents.

**Please turn over →**

If you have difficulty using the Directory Assistance service, Telstra has another service called the **Directory Assistance Helpline**. When you use this service, you will be assisted by a real person, rather than a computer. Unlike the standard Directory Assistance service, the Helpline is only available to people with a disability who meet the eligibility criteria. If you are interested in obtaining this service, you need to telephone Telstra's Disability Enquiry Hotline on 1800 068 424.

## Call Connection Services

Telstra's "Call Connect 12456" enables you to dial the operator who will make the connection for you. The operator then connects you straight through. This avoids having to write the number down, remember it or type the number into your phone. The service does attract fees which can mount up quickly; with an initial fee of \$1.60 when you call the 12456 number, and an additional 99 cents for attempted connection by the operator – whether it's successful or not. **You should be aware of this cost if you use the service.**

Some clients have contacted the Foundation regarding a fee exemption for Telstra's call connection service. Clients were unsure of the eligibility requirements and so the MD Foundation contacted Telstra to clarify the situation.

## Questions and answers on a free Call Connection service

### Q. Does Telstra offer a fee exemption for the Call Connect service?

A. Yes, Telstra does offer a fee exemption for those customers who satisfy specific eligibility requirements.

### Q. Why does Telstra have eligibility requirements?

A. The eligibility criteria are very clear so that the service is used by those who are in most need and by those for whom it is intended.

### Q. What are the eligibility requirements?

A. People who are vision impaired may be eligible but only if they find it extremely difficult or impossible to dial numbers on the phone without substantial assistance. In addition an appropriately qualified healthcare professional must certify that there is a disability that makes it impossible or extremely difficult for the person with a vision impairment to dial a phone number from a standard phone without substantial assistance.

### Q. What would be an example of eligibility?

A. An example is that you may have a vision impairment and also dexterity problems caused by bad arthritis or you may have severe shaking of your hand.

### Q. What phone services does this apply to?

A. The exemption applies only to 'Call Connect' calls (ph 12456) made from the fixed line telephone service that has been registered for the exemption. It only applies to the Call Connect service fee. At this time, the exemption does not apply to calls from mobile phones.

### Q. Who can I contact for an application form?

A. Telstra customers who believe they may qualify for the fee exemption should contact Telstra's Disability Enquiry Hotline on 1800 068 424 and ask for an application form to be sent to their postal address.

### Q. Who else can help?

A. Please call the Foundation on 1800 111 709 if you would like further information.

**The Foundation thanks Telstra for the advice provided and for helping make telecommunications accessible.**

**Macular Degeneration is Australia's leading cause of blindness**

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