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COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus and can cause severe illness for some people with disability. Some people recover quickly from it and others may be at higher risk of getting very sick.

For more information on how to protect yourself and those you care for, and what to do if you get COVID-19, visit the [Department of Health and Aged Care website \(external\)](#).

The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 is by staying up to date with vaccinations. You should also wear face masks where needed, practice good hygiene, maintain physical distancing and self-isolate when you are unwell.

For more information on COVID-19 vaccines, including information on booking a vaccination appointment visit the [Department of Health and Aged Care website \(external\)](#) . You can also ask your healthcare professional, GP or pharmacist if you need to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

## Personal protective equipment (PPE)

### Can I use my NDIS plan to buy PPE?

You can use your NDIS funds to purchase PPE items when:

- you have a reasonable and necessary need for PPE items like face masks (e.g: surgical or N95), face shields and gloves
- PPE is used when your disability worker is providing your supports
- You get an average of at least 1 hour a day of face-to-face daily living supports
- The cost of PPE should not be more than \$50 a week.

You can use your Core supports budget to purchase these items:

You can use the Low Cost Disability-Related Health Consumables line item in your Core Supports budget to purchase PPE (03\_040000919\_0103\_1\_1).

Core Supports and self-managed participants can purchase and claim this PPE through the participant portal. NDIA-managed participants can purchase PPE through registered providers.

If you need to purchase masks to use outside the home, this is an everyday expense, and you cannot use your NDIS funds to pay for them.

Generally, everyday use of hand sanitiser is a personal expense.

However, if you receive close personal support and find that you are using more hand sanitiser than you would under normal circumstances, you can use your NDIS plan to cover the cost of extra hand sanitiser.

### **Do I need a plan reassessment to purchase PPE for my personal care needs?**

No. Participants can manage PPE purchases from their existing Core Supports budget.

You can use the Low Cost Disability-Related Health Consumables line item in your Core Supports budget to purchase PPE (03\_040000919\_0103\_1\_1).

If your circumstances have significantly changed due to COVID-19 please [contact NDIS](#) to discuss your situation.

### **Can providers charge me for using PPE?**

No. Providers can't claim the cost of PPE for support workers from a participant's plan.

From 1 January 2022, there has been a temporary increase in some NDIS price limits to cover the costs of support worker PPE.

Your provider should talk to you about any price changes, and you should both agree to any proposed changes to service bookings.

All plans reassessed or approved since 1 January 2022 have increased funding included to cover the costs of support worker PPE.

This means providers no longer need to claim this separately from your plan for PPE.

If your plan was approved before 1 January 2022, and you are concerned your funds are running low, please [contact the NDIS](#).

## **Do I have to pay the higher price limits?**

No – the price you pay is an agreement between you and your provider.

The temporary increase to some price limits is in recognition of the ongoing costs of PPE to providers.

PPE forms part of our commitments in the [Corporate Plan 2021-25](#) to ensure participant safety.

While we don't set the prices that providers charge, a registered provider cannot charge you more than the price limits in the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits – unless you are self-managed.

If you think the prices are too high, you can:

- Discuss this with your provider or support coordinator
- Choose to find another provider.

## **What should I do if my plan funds are running low because of the PPE pricing changes?**

If your plan was approved before 1 January 2022, and you are concerned your funds are running low, you should [contact the NDIS](#).

Participants and providers can discuss their service agreement and agree to any proposed changes to service bookings, and to check changes are within the participant's budget.

We have a process in place to monitor plan utilisation and identify participants who are likely to utilise their entire funded supports before their plan end date.

We will ensure participants continue to receive supports without disruption.

## **Should I and/or my disability support worker be wearing face masks?**

Wearing a mask is one way to help protect you and others from COVID-19.

A mask is recommended in high-risk settings including:

- Residential aged and disability care settings
- In-home care and disability care
- Hospitals and other health care settings.
- You should consider health advice provided to you by your health care professional and your state or territory government.

Visit your local state or territory health website for advice, as this is often changing:

- advice about [face masks in NSW](#)
- advice about [face masks in Victoria](#)
- advice about [face masks in Queensland](#)
- advice about [face masks in Western Australia](#)
- advice about [face masks in South Australia](#) .
- advice about [face masks in Australian Capital Territory](#)
- advice about [face masks in Northern Territory](#)
- advice about [face masks in Tasmania](#) .

The recommendation to wear a face mask does not apply to children (people aged under 12), people with breathing difficulties and anyone who has physical conditions that make it difficult to wear a face mask.

You can also find [more information about masks and keeping safe](#) .

**I'm deaf and need help with communication when face masks are worn, can I buy a transcribing app for my phone to help me engage in the community?**

We encourage participants to purchase low cost AT items to access disability related supports that help achieve your goals. For example, downloading or purchasing a translation phone app to help you engage with the community, using your existing Core Supports budget.

It is important to remember that NDIS funding is for disability-related supports, not for everyday or ordinary living expenses.

## Rapid Antigen Test (RAT)

**Who is eligible to purchase RATs with their core supports?**

NDIS participants, who need to use RATs to receive their reasonable and necessary NDIS supports, are eligible to purchase RATs with their existing Core Supports.

Supports budget to purchase Rapid Antigen Test (03\_040000919\_0103\_1\_1).

### **When does this initiative end?**

You can continue to purchase RATs while they are needed to access your reasonable and necessary supports.

You should not claim the cost of RATs you purchased for other reasons, e.g., for general use.

The NDIA will continue to monitor current arrangements and advise of any future changes.

### **How do I purchase a RAT?**

You can purchase RATs from pharmacies, supermarkets and some other places sell them. If you need help to purchase a RAT, speak to your support workers, family or friends or your local pharmacist.

If you need RATs to safely access your disability-related supports, eligible NDIS participants can purchase [RATs through their NDIS plan](#).

Can I claim the whole cost of RATs or just part of the cost?

You can claim the whole purchase amount from your Core Supports budget.

Can I claim for RATs which I have previously purchased?

You can claim for RATs you have purchased previously, as long as you needed the RATs to access your reasonable and necessary NDIS supports.

You should not claim the cost of RATs you purchased for other reasons, e.g. for general use.

### **How many RATs can I purchase with my core supports budget?**

You can purchase the amount you need to receive reasonable and necessary NDIS supports.

## **What if I don't have enough funds in my Core Supports?**

Most participants have enough funds in their Core Supports budget.

If you are concerned your funds are running low, please contact the NDIS.

## **What is a reasonable and necessary disability related need to pay for RATs?**

Your reasonable and necessary supports are those that are already funded in your NDIS plan. You can purchase a RAT when you need it to access your reasonable and necessary supports.

You can only purchase RATs for you or your support worker to access your reasonable and necessary supports.

## **I'm worried about getting sick, especially because I am at higher risk of getting unwell if I get COVID-19. Can I ask all visitors to my home (including social visits) to take a RAT I purchase with my NDIS funds?**

You can only purchase RATs for yourself or your support worker, if taking a RAT is necessary to access your reasonable and necessary supports.

You should not claim RATs for any other purpose.

You can ask people visiting you to take a RAT test before they visit to make sure you remain safe from COVID-19.

## **Can I get help to take and read the results of my RAT?**

If you have a visual impairment, and you're an NDIS participant, you can use your plan funding to get help reading RAT instructions and results.

There is a [visual interpreter service](#) that offers free 30 minute interpreter sessions, to provide COVID-19 assistance, including help with RATs .

You can also ask your support worker, family, or carer to help you take and read the results of a RAT test. For added protection, yourself, your support worker, family, or carer can wear a mask, personal protective equipment and follow COVID-19 safe behaviours when assisting with taking RATs.

## Health and safety

### **What help is available for participants to access COVID-19 vaccines?**

If one of your providers helps you to attend an offsite location to receive your COVID-19 vaccinations, they may be eligible to claim \$75 per COVID-19 dose for any vaccination.

This payment is claimed directly from the NDIA and does not come out of your budget. Your provider or support worker can help you make a COVID-19 vaccine appointment and support you to get to your health service.

To receive the best protection against serious illness from COVID-19 you should get all recommended doses for your age or individual health needs.

### **Do I have to get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Vaccination remains the most important way to stay safe from COVID-19. Vaccinations are voluntary. Providers can only make vaccination appointments with your consent.

You can talk with your GP and other healthcare professionals about the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccinations. Final consent is your decision, and you can have support to decide. You can visit the Department of Health and Aged Care website [for more information about COVID-19 vaccines for people with disability](#).

### **Can I use my low cost assistive technology (AT) budget to purchase a portable air purifier?**

Portable air purifiers are one way to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

You can use your existing Core Supports budget – consumables category to purchase a portable air purifier (or other ventilation device such as a portable extraction fan or pedestal fan) to ensure safe access to NDIS funded supports in your home, where you:

- Have a disability that compromises your breathing (lung function) and/or puts you at increased risk of catching, or becoming very unwell if you acquire, COVID-19
- Are at increased risk of acquiring COVID-19 due to the close personal supports you receive each day from support workers in your home
- Cannot (due to disability) reduce your risk of catching COVID-19 by following health advice (e.g. to wear a mask) or ventilate the areas where you live in other ways (e.g., opening windows).

You do not need to provide any evidence or seek approval for any low cost AT device purchased below \$1,500 in value, however you must keep the [evidence](#).

The expected price range of a portable air purifier varies between \$300-\$700 per unit.

If you need additional funding or believe you need to purchase a device valued at more than \$1,500, you will need to seek a plan reassessment and provide relevant [evidence](#).

If you do decide to purchase a portable air purifier you should seek professional advice before selecting and installing ventilation improvement equipment within your home.

For more information, visit the [AT explained webpage](#) or Our Guideline.

### **What happens if I or my provider get COVID-19 or need to self-isolate?**

If you or your provider contracts COVID-19, your provider may need to notify the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#).

If a provider is unable to provide you supports, they must report this to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

If you are funded for supported independent living (SIL) and need to isolate your SIL provider can claim additional costs to manage your care and support from the NDIA. Funding for these supports will not come from your plan.

This support covers:



- \$300 for a one-off professional deep clean of your SIL residence
- Additional support of \$1,200 a day, per household. This is on top of the cost of your usual SIL supports and includes increased costs for staffing, equipment, laundering and more.

Providers may be able to claim more if you live in a remote location.

For more information, please [contact the NDIS](#).

### **What happens if a support worker with COVID-19 attends my home?**

If you have a support worker attend your home who later tests positive to COVID-19, your providers may contact you to organise a one-off professional deep clean of your house. The NDIA will then pay the provider for the cost of this deep clean.

You may need to self-isolate due to being a close contact, you must follow health advice.

### **I need to self-isolate. What do I need to tell my employer?**

If you are unwell, have any COVID-19 symptoms, or are diagnosed with COVID-19, you should tell your employer immediately.

You should talk to your employer about who you have been in contact with at work, and how they can support you during self-isolation.

If your employer can't offer services while you are at home, there may be other vocational services other providers might be able to offer.

### **Need help with mental health support?**

If you feel impact on your mental health and well-being, there are many resources available to help.

To help people with disability, your family and carers look after your mental health and well-being we have a [Support for Participants with Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information pack](#) available.

Information relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) and mental health is available on the [Department of Health website](#).

For additional support, contact:

- [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14
- [Kids Helpline](#) on 1800 551 800
- [Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 224 636
- [Headspace](#) on 1800 650 890
- [SANE Australia](#) on 1800 187 263
- [Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467
- Australian Government [Department of Health](#) 24-hour Coronavirus hotline on 1800 020 080
- NDIS on 1800 800 110

### **What supports and therapies should I use if there is an outbreak in my area?**

You might like to see how your rostered supports can be staggered throughout the day, to minimise the number of people in the house while also meeting your support needs. Consider whether the same paid support workers can also help the other people in your home, while still meeting your needs.

Consider which of your services and supports are non-essential and see whether these can be delivered by telehealth, email or phone.

You should assess all non-critical supports if you need to maintain physical distancing. Think about what technology you can use to maintain social contact with friends, family, providers, and the community.

Support workers need to comply with their employers' Work and Health Safety obligations.

### **My family usually care for me, but now they can't, what should I do (with video)?**

The funding in your core support budget is flexible, so you can use the funding in this budget to purchase the disability-related supports you need.

You can decide how to use this funding for day-to-day assistance, to pay support workers to help with everyday tasks like grocery shopping, or daily living tasks.

If you are concerned about your funding, please [contact the NDIS](#).

[Transcript for 'My family usually care for me, but now they can't, what should I do?'](#)

## **My regular support workers can't deliver services to me (with video)**

If your support workers can't work with you, your provider should be in touch to organise a replacement worker or carer to help you.

It's important that you discuss what your essential needs are with your providers, to ensure they are being met.

All NDIS providers are expected to follow NDIS rules, codes and policies.

[Transcript for 'My regular support workers can't deliver services to me'](#)

## **Meal preparation and delivery**

### **Can I use my NDIS fund to pay for home delivery for my groceries?**

The NDIS will fund the costs of preparing a meal and its delivery through your Core Supports budget.

There are three parts to funded food costs, labour, and delivery.

The NDIS will cover the costs of:

- Preparing a meal
- Having it delivered to you.

You cannot use NDIS funds to buy food. Core Supports funds can be used to help prepare or deliver meals if you can't do this yourself.

### **I'm an NDIA-managed participant. How do I claim for a meal preparation and delivery service?**

Visit the [COVID-19 payments and billing page](#) to learn more about claiming this support.

For more information, visit [our guidelines on meal preparation](#).

## How do I find a registered meal preparation and delivery service provider?

Search for a registered provider using the [provider finder](#).

## I'm a plan-managed participant. How do I claim for a meal preparation and delivery service?

You can use your Core Supports budget to buy meal preparation and delivery services, without an approved quote.

Your plan manager can claim for the meal preparation and delivery costs, not food costs, using the new support item 01\_023\_0120\_1\_1: Assistance with the cost of preparation and delivery of meals, with your agreement.

If you choose an unregistered provider, you can claim:

- 100% of the invoice, if food costs have been removed
- 70% of the invoice if food costs have not been removed from the total cost.

All claims are subject to the NDIA payment assurance process.

## Can I ask my support worker to help me with online shopping?

Yes. You can ask your provider to help you with different disability-related tasks, like online grocery shopping or visiting the pharmacy to ensure you have enough supplies of medication.

Your Core Supports budget is the most flexible.

In most cases, you can use your funding across any of the Core Supports budget categories to ensure you can get the disability-related support you need.

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