

NDIS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information Pack

**Support for Participants with
Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

November 2020

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Introduction

This information pack provides information on what to do if you are being tested or are diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19).

If you are a participant and have been diagnosed with coronavirus (COVID-19), the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) can provide additional resources to help you maintain essential supports.

Please contact us if you need any help maintaining your essential NDIS supports. Call 1800 800 110 and select option 5.

What do I do if I think I might have COVID-19?

Step 1 – Getting tested

If you think you might have COVID-19, you should talk to your local health system or doctor and get tested. For more information, go to the [Department of Health](#) website.

Step 2 – Isolate while you wait for your results

If you get tested for the virus, or you have symptoms, you need to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

You cannot stop anywhere after you have had the test, not even to buy medicine or groceries. Where possible, use personal transport such as a private car to go to and from the testing location.

While you are waiting for the results of your test you should contact your providers and discuss the essential supports you need while you wait for the test results.

You must follow the advice of your local Department of Health and isolate yourself until you get your test results.

Read more about what isolation is, steps you should take while in isolation, and what to do if you live with someone in isolation, on the [Department of Health](#) website.

Isolation is different from [quarantine](#) and [physical distancing](#).

Step 3 – Getting your results

If your results are negative, you should talk to your providers and notify them you do not have COVID-19.

If your results are positive, you must continue to stay home.

You must stay isolated until your state or territory health system advises you are safe to leave. If you leave isolation without permission you may face criminal charges or a fine.

Step 4 – Who should I notify?

We encourage you to notify the NDIA by talking to your Local Area Coordinator, Early Childhood partner, planner or by contacting 1800 800 1100 and select option 5.

By telling us we can work closely with you, your state or territory health system and providers to ensure you continue to get the essential support you need.

Participants impacted by COVID-19 will be prioritised to ensure they continue to receive their disability related supports, including any additional supports or funding they need.

If you live in Supported Independent Living accommodation, and have been diagnosed with COVID-19, your provider must immediately advise the [NDIS Commission](#). The [NDIS Commission](#) will advise the NDIA, and we will update your plan with additional funding as soon as possible.

Step 6 – Accessing essential disability supports

It's important that you talk to your provider if you have been tested or have a confirmed case of COVID-19. You should talk about your essential support needs and how it will work best for you and if they can support you while you have a positive diagnosis.

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

Your providers should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as mask, glasses, gloves and gowns when delivering services to you. In many states and territories they have made it mandatory for support workers to wear PPE when delivering services

We encourage you to follow the [Department of Health](#) advice on what to do when essential workers are visiting your home to provide services.

Additional support in Victoria

In Victoria, the NDIA has announced temporary measures to support providers and participants living in residential settings in Victoria.

These temporary measures include:

- Having a panel of experienced disability providers offering additional workforce support, infection prevention and control training, and isolation accommodation for providers of residential supports to access as needed.
- Appointing Aspen Medical to provide clinical first response for any identified outbreak to ensure that infection control procedures, personal protective equipment (PPE) and nursing support is immediately in place for residents and workers if needed.

Step 7 – Understanding your rights and provider obligations

NDIS providers have obligations under the [NDIS Code of Conduct](#) and the [NDIS Practice Standards](#) that relate to the delivery of safe, quality supports and services, and the management of risks associated with the supports provided to NDIS participants.

If a provider has withdrawn services, you should contact the [NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission \(NDIS Commission\)](#) by phoning 1800 035 544. If you are in Western Australia, you can continue to contact the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office to make a complaint until 30 November 2020.

Step 8 – Finding new support workers

If you have immediate concerns about not receiving essential supports, contact the NDIA on 1800 800 110 and select option 5.

We have dedicated teams to provide additional support to participants in impacted areas.

Step 9 – Support from family and friends

Having COVID-19 means you can't leave home for a certain period. This can make it difficult to get food, toiletries, medications and other essential items. It's especially hard if you live alone.

Your family members, carer or friends may be able to provide support, by collecting groceries, medication and other essential items for you.

You can also take advantage of the many businesses and services offering home delivery, such as pharmacies delivering medications to your home.

Additional NDIS supports

Supported Independent Living (SIL)

To support participants diagnosed with COVID-19 while living in [Supported Independent Living](#) arrangements, the NDIA has temporarily introduced two new support items for cleaning services and higher intensity support.

The two support items are:

- Cleaning services: up to \$300 for a one-off professional deep cleaning of your residence.
- Higher intensity support: \$1,200 maximum daily rate for supports such as increased staffing, personal protective equipment (PPE), professional laundering, and any ancillary costs directly related to your COVID-19 diagnosis.

This funding is available whether you:

- are diagnosed with COVID-19, required to self-isolate or quarantine
- are living in your usual SIL accommodation
- are admitted to hospital
- relocated to alternative housing for isolation purposes or while transitioning into or out of hospital, or
- move through all the above situations.

This approach will be in place until 28 February 2021.

Providers can continue to claim SIL costs if you are admitted to hospital or isolated in alternative accommodation. They can also claim the cost of the alternative accommodation.

Using your NDIS plan flexibly

We have made changes to the myplace portal so all participants, no matter how their plan is managed, can use their core supports budget flexibly to purchase the services and supports they need.

This means you can use your core support budget to pay for services you need during the COVID-19 pandemic that you might not have needed before.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

If you receive an average of at least one hour a day of face-to-face daily living supports, you can access up to \$50 per week from your NDIS plan for PPE for you to use when a support worker is with you.

PPE support is available in:

- Victoria – 29 July to 30 November 2020
- New South Wales – 29 July to 31 October 2020
- restricted areas of Queensland – from 22 August to 25 September 2020.

Plan and self-managed participants can purchase PPE and record and claim their purchases in the usual way. Agency-managed participants can purchase PPE through registered providers.

If you need to purchase face coverings or masks for use outside the home, this is still an everyday expense, and you can't use your NDIS plan to pay for them.

Generally, hand sanitiser is a personal expense. However, if you receive close personal support and find that you are using more hand sanitiser than normally, you can use your NDIS plan to cover the cost of extra hand sanitiser.

You can use the Low Cost Disability-Related Health Consumables line item in your core supports budget to purchase hand sanitiser, as you would for PPE like gloves and face masks. Funding the extra cost of hand sanitiser is a temporary change during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PPE and providers

Talk to your provider about the PPE your support workers need.

Your provider can claim the cost of PPE from your plan with your prior agreement or, if you're in an area with restrictions, they can invoice the NDIA directly. If they do this, the cost of PPE will not come from your plan.

There are price limits for PPE, and your provider can't claim more than the costs set out in the [NDIS Price Guide and Support Catalogue](#).

For more information about using and getting access to PPE, visit the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website](#).

Assistive Technology

To help you continue to receive NDIS funded supports and services during this period, we have temporarily broadened the flexible approach to purchasing low cost assistive technology (AT).

You are able to spend up to \$1,500 on low cost AT items from your existing budget. This allows you to buy low cost AT items you need, such as smart devices, in consultation with your existing support providers.

You can use your existing NDIS funding to purchase an item if:

- it will maintain funded NDIS supports like a program, therapy or requirement (for example physiotherapy or Auslan interpreting provided via video conferencing),
- your provider of supports has confirmed in writing the device is necessary to continue supports and services while maintaining physical distancing requirements,
- it is the lowest specification that will maintain funded supports,
- you do not already have the item, another suitable item or access to the item,
- the item has not been funded by another service system (such as education),
- the item or circumstances are not specifically excluded.

More information on AT is available on the [NDIS website](#).

Resources

[The NDIS website](#) will continue to be updated with general information, and information about COVID-19 and how it relates to the NDIS.

Contacting us

Call us on 1800 800 110, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm (local time). Select option 5 for plan enquiries related to COVID-19.

Disability Information Helpline

The Disability Information Helpline is for people with disability, their families and carers who need help because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Helpline is free, private and fact-checked.

You can contact the Helpline in the following ways:

- Phone (free call): 1800 643 787
- If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can also call the National Relay Service on 133 677.

The Helpline is available Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm (AEST) and Saturday and Sunday 9am to 7pm (AEST). It's not available on national public holidays.

Find out more on the [Department of Social Services website](#).