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COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, with symptoms including a sore throat, fever, coughing or shortness of breath. Some people recover quickly and easily, and others may get very sick, very quickly.

Vaccinations, good hygiene, physical distancing and isolating yourself when necessary can prevent infection for most people.

Participants aged 5 or older, their carers and support workers are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

For further health information about COVID-19 in your location, we encourage you to refer to local health orders in your state or territory.

## 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
- the items are used when your disability worker is providing your supports
- you receive an average of at least 1 hour a day of face-to-face daily living supports.

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

- use the Disability-Related Health Consumables - Low Cost support line item:  
03\_040000919\_0103\_1\_1
- the cost of PPE should be not more than \$50 a week.

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

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

Generally, the ordinary 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. NDIS plans are not being adjusted for eligible participants to purchase PPE. Participants should 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.

As part of our initial COVID-19 response we made changes to the myplace portal so all participants, no matter how their plan is managed, could use their Core supports budget flexibly to purchase the services and supports they need.

If your circumstances have significantly changed due to COVID-19 please contact 1800 800 110 and select option 5 to discuss your situation.

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

Providers can no longer 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.

Providers should talk to you about what this will mean for the cost of your services.

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.

If your plan was reassessed before 1 January 2022 and you are concerned your funds are running low, you can call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 Monday to Friday, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

We have a dedicated option to allow you to identify if you have a COVID-19 related query.

We continuously monitor public health orders and the need for this support.

The NDIS [COVID Addendum](#) outlines the dates for these temporary supports.

## **Will my plan funds be increased to cover the price limit increases from 1 January 2022?**

All plans 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, you can call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 Monday to Friday, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

We have a dedicated option to allow you to identify if you have a COVID-19 related query.

## **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 and you can get better value for money with another provider, you can discuss this with your provider or support coordinator or you may even choose to find another provider.

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

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

If your plan was approved before 1 January 2022, and you are concerned your funds are running low, you can call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 Monday to Friday, from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

We have a dedicated option to allow you to identify if you have a COVID-19 related query.

More information about [changing your plan](#) is on the NDIS website.

Participants and providers can also discuss their service agreement and agree to any proposed changes to service bookings, to ensure it aligns with 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.

## I'm in an area with community transmission – should I and/or my disability support worker be wearing face masks?

You should follow your local public health advice. If the government in your state or territory says that you must wear a mask, you must do so.

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](#) .

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 live in an area where face coverings are required, can I buy a transcribing app for my phone to help me engage in the community?**

Participants are encouraged to use the flexible approach to [purchasing low cost AT items](#) to access the disability related supports needed to pursue your goals. For example, downloading or purchasing a translation phone app to assist 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 are required to use RATs in order to receive their reasonable and necessary NDIS supports, are eligible to purchase RATs with their core supports.

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

You can purchase RATs with your core supports budget.

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

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

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

If you need to purchase a RAT, speak to your local pharmacist, you may be eligible for free tests if you are a concession card holder.

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

SIL providers can claim \$12.50 per RAT when a support worker has to undergo COVID-19 testing to safely deliver supports to a participant, as part of our ongoing [COVID-19 support measures](#).

### **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.

### **Do I need a plan reassessment to purchase RATs?**

No. You can purchase RATs with your existing core supports budget.

### **Why can RATs only be claimed from core supports budget? What if I don't have sufficient funds in my core supports?**

RATs are funded from core supports budget as they are a disability related health support which are required in order to receive your NDIS funded supports or services.

Anyone who needs support for their daily living activities will have core supports budget in their plan and they can use these flexibly to access those supports.

Most participants have sufficient funds in their core supports budget.

If you are concerned about the impact (of purchasing RATs) to your funded supports, you can call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 Monday to Friday, from 8.00am to 8.00pm.

We have a dedicated option to allow you to identify if you have a COVID-19 related query.

### **Will I receive more funding in my plan to cover this?**

Most participants have sufficient funds in their core supports budget.

Your core supports budget is flexible and can be used temporarily to cover the cost of RATs.

If you are concerned about the impact (of purchasing RATs) to your funded supports, you can call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 Monday to Friday, from 8.00am to 8.00pm.

We have a dedicated option to allow you to identify if you have a COVID-19 related query.

### **What constitutes a reasonable and necessary disability related need to pay for the RAT?**

Your reasonable and necessary supports are those that are already funded in your NDIS plan.

You can purchase a RAT where you need it to access your reasonable and necessary supports.

### **Can I claim a test for my support worker?**

If your support workers need to undergo a RAT to ensure they can safely deliver your supports, you may also purchase a RAT for them.

**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.

### **Can providers also claim for RATs?**

Eligible providers can were able to directly claim \$12.50 per RAT from the NDIS between 23 December 2021 to 31 August 2022. This support measure is now finalised.

## **Health and safety**

### **What assistance is available for participants to access the COVID-19 vaccine?**

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, including primary dose and any additional booster vaccinations.

This is effective from 1 April 2022 (replacing previous \$150 and \$75 vaccine enablement payments).

The payments are not paid from your NDIS funds. Providers can claim by invoicing the NDIA.

This pays for the provider's administration costs.

Providers can also claim the costs of delivering this support from your plan, such as transport and support workers.

The following types of providers are eligible for these payments if they help you to attend an offsite location to receive your COVID-19 vaccinations



- SIL Providers
- providers of Daily Activities supports
- providers of Community Participation supports
- support coordinators
- plan managers
- providers of specialised supported employment
- providers of group and centre based activities

You can discuss with your provider how to best access the COVID-19 vaccination.

Vaccinations are voluntary. Providers can only make vaccination appointments with your consent.

You can talk with your GP and other health professionals to discuss the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccination. Final consent is your decision and you can have support to make a decision.

[More information for people with disability about COVID-19 vaccines](#) .

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

You can temporarily use your existing core - consumables budget 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 acquiring, or becoming very unwell if you acquire, COVID-19
- are at increased risk of acquiring COVID-19 due to the nature and volume of close personal supports you receive each day from support workers in your home
- are unable (due to disability) to effectively minimise your risk of acquiring COVID-19 by following public health advice (e.g. to wear a mask), or otherwise ensure adequate ventilation within your home or residence by other means (e.g. opening windows).

You do not need to provide any evidence or otherwise seek approval for any low cost AT device purchased below \$1,500 in value, but 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](#). You can refer to the following for more information:

- [Participant factsheet – Understanding assistive technology evidence, advice, assessments and quotes](#)
- [Mid cost AT](#)

Portable air purifiers are unlikely on their own to prevent transmission of COVID-19. You should consider current health advice on how to effectively minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission within your home. Improving ventilation and air quality (whether through natural or mechanical means) is just one of a hierarchy of controls that should be considered.

You should also seek professional advice before selecting and installing a portable air purifier or other ventilation improvement equipment within your home, if you choose this as a control.

For more information on low cost AT, read [Our Guideline – Assistive Technology](#) .

## **What happens if I or my provider get COVID-19 or need to go into quarantine?**

If you or your provider contracts COVID-19, they are required to notify the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#) in the first instance.

If a provider is unable to provide you supports they must report this to the Commission.

You can also phone the NDIS Contact Centre on 1800 800 110 and select option 5 if your situation has changed due to COVID-19.

This includes if you are running out of funds in your plan. All calls received relating to COVID-19 are prioritised.

If you contract COVID-19, your state or territory health system is the first contact point.

The NDIA will work closely with the health system.

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

Anyone who needs support for their daily living activities will have core supports budget in their plan and they can use these flexibly to access those supports.

Most participants have sufficient funds in their core support budget.

If you have any questions about how your funding or supports will be impacted if your contract COVID-19, please contact the NDIS on 1800 800 110 to talk through your individual needs.

If you are funded for supported independent living (SIL) and are required to isolate or quarantine under federal or state/territory government COVID-19 policies your SIL provider can claim additional costs to manage your care and support.

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 charge more if you live in a remote location.

Providers can directly claim for these supports from the NDIA. Funding for these supports will not come from your plan.

For more information [contact us](#) by phone 1800 800 110 and select option 5.

## **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 provider can claim the cost of a one-off professional deep clean of your house directly from the NDIA.

If this happens, 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.

Providers can claim for one off deep cleans for your home directly from the NDIA from 7 February 2022. Any deep cleans that happen before 7 February 2022, can be paid for from your plan.

You may be required to self-isolate due to being a close contact, you must follow government or medical advice.

If you need more assistance or your NDIS funds are low, you can call us on 1800 800 110.

Special teams of planners in the NDIA are available to discuss your situation and undertake a plan reassessment if needed.

### **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.

Just because you need to go into quarantine, this may not mean that the support you are getting from your employer needs to stop.

Think about ways that you can keep working towards your employment goals, and discuss ways that you can work together from home.

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

### **Is it safe for me to go to work during COVID-19?**

You should follow [your local state or territory public health advice](#).

If your area is not under restrictions, or you are a permitted or essential worker, it is your employers' responsibility to make sure they are providing a safe workplace and minimising the chance of spreading COVID-19 among their employees.

Information in Easy Read is available for people who work in an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE):

- [Easy Read - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for people who work in ADEs \(PDF 4.8MB\)](#)
- [Easy Read \(text only\) - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for people who work in ADEs \(DOCX 36KB\)](#)

### **Where can I access mental health resources and help?**

If you are feeling the impact on your mental health and well-being, there are a range of resources available to help.

We have released information packs on:

- [psychosocial disability](#) – to help people with psychosocial disability and their carers get the most out of their NDIS plan during the pandemic.
- [mental health and well-being](#) – to help you, your family and carers look after your mental health and well-being.

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

Additional resources:

- [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?**

If you are in a known outbreak or ‘hotspot’ area, we encourage you to consider what supports are critical to your health and wellbeing and what supports are not critical right now. This may also mean considering how many support workers are needed to keep you safe and reduce the risk of physical injury.

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.

If you live in a shared environment, consider whether the same paid support workers could also assist 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 telepractice or other means, like email or phone.

You should reconsider all non-critical supports if you are in a known outbreak area in order to maintain physical distancing but consider what technology you can use to maintain social contact with friends, family, providers and the community.

For example, you may continue in-home support from a support worker for day-to-day activities like showering, but stop attending a social program in the community and chat to friends online instead.

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 overall 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 your Core support funding is low, we will move the funding in your capacity budget to your Core support budget, so that you can use it flexibly for day-to-day assistance.

We are making more NDIS plans self-managed, so that you can use your funding more flexibly.

Call us on 1800 800 110 if you need to change your plan management arrangements.

[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?

If you normally have a support worker help you cook meals or shop for groceries, you may decide to use this funding to have groceries delivered or meals prepared and delivered for a short time instead.

You cannot use NDIS funds to buy food. The NDIS can only cover the cost of preparing a meal and having the meal or groceries delivered to you.

If you have meal preparation supports in your plan, this funding is in your core budget and is flexible.

You'll need to think about the best way to use the funding in your plan.

You can change your arrangements for a limited time, without the need for a plan reassessment.

We recently updated our [guidelines on meal preparation](#) .

If you have questions please talk to your local area coordinator, planner or support coordinator.

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

Your Core supports budget is generally flexible.

You can purchase meal preparation and delivery for a limited time through several existing registered providers.

Registered providers 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.

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

Meal preparation and delivery invoices have 3 parts: food costs, labour and delivery.

- The NDIS will cover the cost of preparing a meal (labour) and having it delivered to you.
- The NDIS will not cover the cost of food or ingredients, these are day-to-day living costs not related to your disability support needs.

The food part of the total costs is a daily living cost and should be paid separately using your personal funds. Providers may ask you to pay for this portion of the support upfront.

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

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

- Enter the name of a provider in the 'Provider Name' search to see if they are registered.
- Select 'Household tasks' from the 'Registration Group' drop down to find registered providers of meal preparation and delivery supports.

## 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.

You can purchase meal preparation and delivery for a limited time through registered or unregistered providers.

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 assist you with different disability-related tasks, like helping you with online grocery shopping, or visiting the pharmacy to ensure you have adequate supplies of medication.

Your Core supports budget is the most flexible. In most cases, you can use your funding across any of the Core support categories to ensure you can get the disability-related support you need during this time.

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