



## A GUIDE TO ASSIST YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR OWN PREPARENESS PLAN DURING COVID-19

This is a guide to help people with disability to get the facts about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and make a plan for how they will manage the impact of this situation. People with disability need a plan that is tailored to their unique support needs.

### What should I do?

There are two things you can do now to keep yourself safe:

1. **Get the facts** about COVID-19 so you understand your risks and can take steps to protect yourself;
2. **Make a plan** for how you will manage the risks to your health and well-being during this period of uncertainty. This includes knowing what you will do if you or someone who supports you experience symptoms of COVID-19. Your Ability Plus Disability Services' Coordinator will be in contact with you to help you develop a COVID19 Plan that relates to your services with Ability Plus.

We all need to be prepared and know what to do before, during, and after an emergency. People with disability may need additional support, resources, or advocacy during this health emergency.

Public health emergencies are unpredictable. Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that has no treatment at this time. This can make people feel worried or anxious.

Having a plan means knowing how you will:

- Manage your own needs;
- Stay in touch with family, friends and workers in different ways to help stop the spread of the virus;
- Know where to get help; and
- Support others during this period of uncertainty.

Having a plan helps:

- People to manage their mental health and well-being;
- Build individual and community resilience.

## Get COVID-19 Facts

### You might catch novel coronavirus (COVID-19) if:

- Someone with the virus sneezes or coughs onto you
- Someone with the virus coughed or sneezed onto a surface (like a door handle) that you touched, and you get infected droplets on your hands and then transfer them to your mouth, nose, or eyes when you touch your face or eat.

### There are 5 ways that we can all help stop the spread of viruses:

- Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or bent elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your face, nose and mouth. Do not shake hands.
- Stay home, especially if you are unwell.
- Practice social distancing, which includes staying 1.5 meters away from others as much as you can.

### Household cleaning is also important:

Germs can live outside the body, on surfaces, after a person coughs or sneezes.

### Regular cleaning is important for:

- Reducing the spread of germs and
- Minimising the number of germs surviving on surfaces.

## How do I get information about COVID-19

### Get the facts from trusted sites:

- Victoria Health <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/>
- Australian Government Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/>
- National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) <https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-and-other-government-services/ndis-and-disaster-response>
- Health Direct Coronavirus Hub <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus>

We all need to be prepared and know what to do before, during, and after an emergency. People with disability may need additional support, resources, or advocacy during this health emergency. Ability Plus Disability Services is dedicated to keeping you informed throughout this pandemic and will continue to provide regular updates via email or on our website [www.abilityp.com.au](http://www.abilityp.com.au). If you have any questions or need someone to talk to please contact your Ability Plus Disability Services Care Coordinator. We are here to support you and your needs throughout this time.

Public health emergencies are unpredictable. Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that has no treatment at this time. This can make people feel worried or anxious.

### **Have a conversation:**

Find people who can help you to get started - this may be your house mates, family or friends. These are the people you should talk with.

You do not have to plan alone, and it is important to reach out to others for support.

**Communication is key. Talk with the people who support you, including your support staff about how you will keep each other safe from COVID-19.**

**Your Ability Plus Disability Services Coordinator will be in contact with you to start having these conversations and help build a plan to ensure your essential needs and choices are supported.**

### **Make a plan**

#### **What am I planning for?**

- Plan to stay at home for a long period of time
- Plan what to do if people who support you are unavailable because of COVID-19
- Plan what you will do if you get COVID-19 symptoms
- Plan what to do if you are diagnosed with COVID-19

#### **How do I make a plan?**

##### **STEP 1. Identify your strengths and support needs**

- Think about what you do, where you do it and who you do it with.
- Consider your roles and responsibilities to others (e.g, partner, children, parents) that you support
- Make a list of the things you need support for in each support area

## STEP 2: Use the following information to plan how you will do things differently during COVID

The questions and tips help you think about:

- How you will manage your supports needs while isolating at home
- Ways to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19
- What you will do if you or someone who supports you gets COVID-19

There are six areas of support that need to be considered:

### Communication



#### Things to consider

- What devices do I use to keep in touch with people? (e.g., landline, mobile, computer, tablet etc.)
- How do I pay my bills?
- Do I have a pre-paid or post-paid plan?
- How will I keep in touch with others?

#### Tips

- If you normally go to the shop to top up your phone, or the post-office to pay your bills, contact your provider to see how you could pay online or over the telephone.
- Check that you have enough data and credit to keep in touch with people
- Now is the time to ask for help around learning how to use technology. Think about what you might like to know (e.g., how to use Facetime; WhatsApp; Messenger; etc) and who could help you learn.
- Think about what back-up devices you could organise now and maybe if you if you only have a landline, is there a family member or friend who has a spare mobile phone they could loan to you?
- Make a plan for how you will receive mail and packages to reduce the spread of germs.
- Wipe packages and clean hands
- Information on Australia Post and mail deliveries are here: <https://auspost.com.au/about-us/news-media/important-updates/coronavirus#location>



## Management of Health

### Things to consider

- What critical health information do I need to share in an emergency?
- What are the options in my area for having my prescriptions delivered?
- What supplies do I need? How will I get them?
- What other things will I need to maintain my health and wellbeing for two weeks?
- How will I take care of my mental health?
- How will I take care of my physical health?
- Do I have anyone who helps me with decisions around my health?

### Tips

- It is important you can continue to get the support you need and **have your essential daily needs met**.
- The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has committed to prioritising participants to ensure they can continue to get their disability-related supports, including additional supports or funding.
- Check you have enough for 14 days or more of your prescription medication, non-prescription medication like aspirin, Panadol, ibuprofen continence aids, gloves, catheters, PEG feeding equipment and formulas, dressings, any other supplies relating to your disability.
- Make a list of your important health information, current medication, essential supplies. Keep it somewhere that you can grab it or share with staff if you need to.
- If you have someone who normally helps you with making decisions around your health, make sure their name and contact number is written in your list.
- If you have a health diary or way of sharing your important health information, make sure others who support you know where it is.
- Check you have any special foods you might need on hand. Try to maintain healthy eating.
- Make a plan for what you can do if your normal exercises and classes are cancelled. Think about what you can do from home to keep up your exercise routine.
- Talk to Ability Plus Disability Services about different ways that can support you with your therapy or services to help you maintain your health and well-being.
- Make sure you have the phone numbers written down somewhere handy to call if you start to feel sick with COVID-19 symptoms call your doctor or the Coronavirus Information Hotline on 1800 020 080.
- Let Ability Plus Disability Services know that you have COVID-19 symptoms
- Call 000 if you get very sick. If someone who supports you gets sick, call Ability Plus Disability Services on 9555 1150. If you are a NDIA participant, you can call the NDIS on 1800800110.



## Assistive Technology (AT)

### Things to consider

- What AT do I use?
- How will I clean my assistive technology to prevent the spread of germs?
- If my wheelchair or other AT breaks down, who do I call?
- What back up equipment do I need?

### Tips

- Make sure you have telephone or computer power cords or spare batteries/re-charging stations for your hearing aids.
- Make a list of items you other items you would need to take with you if you needed to leave your home (e.g., specific utensils, shower chair, hoist)
- Check your power sources and back-up power supplies.
- Review your current AT maintenance schedule and check it is up to date
- NDIS participants: If your AT breaks down and it is an emergency urgent repair, you can call the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) on 1800800110. For More information: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/news/4142-urgent-assistive-technology-repairs>
- Think about if there is any everyday technology you could purchase that would help to manage by yourself. For example, Google home or other home technology could assist you with:
  - voice commands for turning off lights,
  - listening to music,
  - getting news updates etc.



## Personal Support

### Things to consider

- What are my **essential supports that I need** each day?
- What supports must I have?
- What can I live without at this time?

### Tips

- Make a front door sign – This sign asks visitors to stop and consider whether their visit is essential. You can leave instructions for visitors or mail deliveries. A printable version is available at the end of this resource
- Have clear COVID-19 personal support instructions for your support staff, including any new support staff
- Write COVID-19 care instructions down and post them in an accessible location at home.
- Talk to you support staff about the simple steps to keep you all safe from spreading the virus
- You can download and print this infographic to put up on the wall so your support workers can follow simple steps to stop the spread of COVID-19. <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-print-ads-simple-steps-to-stop-the-spread>

If you are an NDIS participant:

- the NDIA has put a range of flexible things in place. If you need to, you can get your worker to do your shopping or get essential medications.

Frequent updates on NDIS disaster response and FAQs here:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-and-other-government-services/ndis-and-disaster-response#faq>

- For older persons with disability - the Commonwealth Government has measures in place for older persons receiving aged care supports to continue to receive the essential services they need.
- Have a back-up list of support workers. Talk to your Ability Plus Disability Services Care Coordinator about back up support workers.
- Keep phone numbers of your service providers handy.
- Know who you will call in an emergency and discuss your plan with your contacts



## Transportation

### Things to consider

- What are my options if I need to travel safely during COVID-19?
- If public transport service isn't an option, how can I get to my essential services if I need to go to doctors or shopping?
- Can I call my doctor, family, friends instead of going in person?

### Tips

- Stop and think about whether you need to leave the house.
- Can someone else go for you?
- Can you call instead?
- If you need to go, consider the safest way to travel where you need to go.
- If you need to see the **doctor or other medical health specialist** telehealth may be available.
- Telehealth happens by video or telephone attendance instead of face-to-face appointments and may be bulk-billed. Check with your doctor or health professional.
- Ensure you have taxi subsidy card somewhere with your other health information if you need to travel in a taxi.
- If you are using ride shares like uber, check that you have their booking apps on your phone if you need to book with them.
- When traveling in a car with a support worker or other driver sit in the back seat to ensure 1.5m distance.
- Ensure the driver disinfects frequently touched surfaces (door handles, window controls) before and after travelling in the vehicle.





## Living Situation

### Things to consider

- Think about where you live and your home situation. Think about who you live with and arrangements you can make now to ensure your safety at home.
- Where do I spend most of my time?
- Who lives nearby that can help me when needed?
- If public transport service isn't an option, how can I get to my essential services if I need to go to doctors or shopping?
- Can I call my doctor, family, friends instead of going in person?

### Tips

- Make a plan if you have to stay in your home with people you live with and how you could keep safe distances from each other.
- Plan now for how you can keep surfaces clean and how you will manage to support each other with meal preparation, laundry, house cleaning and other home maintenance.
- Think about if someone you lived with had to self-isolate somewhere else, and how you can support each other during this period.



## Social Connectedness

### Things to consider

- How can I maintain social connectedness while physically distancing from others?
- Who is in my circles of support both in person and virtually - who do I count on, and who counts on me?
- Who else is nearby that maybe that you could call on? think broadly about this, not only who you see in person, but who else do you have social connections with (e.g. online groups)
- What other ways could I feel connected to others?
- If you got sick, are there people who rely on you to contact them? Who else could they connect with?

### Tips

Make a list of people who are important to notify of your whereabouts, including phone numbers, addresses and email addresses.

- Make a plan for staying connected and in touch with people. Think about:
  - speaking to someone you know at the same time each day (a check-in phone call)
  - using facetime or other applications to speak with people
  - starting a group with friends or family through social media (Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp)
  - speaking with friends or neighbours over the fence or balcony
  - calling friends and family regularly
  - Start an over the phone movie or book club
  - Write letters to people that you haven't seen in a while
  - Make video calls and text friends and family

Reach out and get help for social and emotional support when you need it.

- **Lifeline**

Phone: 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days)

Text: 0477 131 114 (6pm – midnight AEDT 7 nights)

Chat online: [www.lifeline.org.au/crisischat](http://www.lifeline.org.au/crisischat) (7pm - midnight AEDT 7 nights)

Website: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

- **Beyond Blue**

Phone: 1300 224 636 (24 hours/7 days)

Chat online: <https://online.beyondblue.org.au/#/chat/start> (3pm – 12pm AEDT 7 days)

Website: <https://beyondblue.org.au>



## Someone in this house is at higher risk of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

**Please consider if your visit is essential**

If you are showing any of these symptoms **DO NOT VISIT**

**cough | sore throat | runny nose | fever | shortness of breath**

If your visit is essential, please wash your hands immediately for 20 seconds upon entering

Leave any packages at the door

You can contact us on:

This is a sign that you can use to place on your front door to help people stop and think before they knock. There is space at the bottom of the sign so that you can write any further instructions to visitors, or support workers