

COVID-19 information for people with disability and carers

Everybody is at risk of getting coronavirus (COVID-19). For most people, they will only develop mild illness and get better easily, but others may develop severe sickness that affects the lungs. People with disability may get sicker from COVID-19 especially if they:

- already have other medical conditions
- have a weak immune system
- are aged 70 years and over
- are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and aged 50 years and over
- live in supported accommodation or a group home.

Resources for people with disability

There are a range of online resources and services available to people with disability impacted by COVID-19. A family member or carer may be able to support you to take a look at the following websites:

- The Queenslanders with Disability Network, or 'QDN', website (<https://qdn.org.au/home/covid-19/>) has accessible information on COVID-19, self-quarantine and tips on how to stay safe and healthy.
- The NDIS website (<https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus>) has a range of COVID-19 resources and how you can make sure that you have the right support during the COVID-19 period.
- The Disability Support Guide website (<https://www.disabilitysupportguide.com.au/talking-disability/helping-someone-with-intellectual-disability-during-covid-19>) provides information for people with an intellectual disability.
- The Access Easy English website (<https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/covid-19-resources/>) has a range of resources in simple English with pictures.

What should I do if I feel sick?

If you feel sick, call your doctor or 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) to ask what to do next.

Am I allowed to go out?

The government may impose and lift restrictions on people's movements depending on the level of community transmission of COVID-19. If you need to stay at home for safety reasons, or because you are sick, there is support to help you with this. Take a look at the Queenslanders with Disability Network, or 'QDN' website (<https://qdn.org.au/home/covid-19/>) for information about planning your stay at home, and a checklist of essential items.

How can I get food?

If you must stay home for a long time you may need to:

- Ask your friends or family to bring you food. Stay at least two big steps away from them when they arrive.
- Order your groceries online.
- Call the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349 if you need help getting food.

How can I get medical help or order prescriptions from home?

People with disability may get very sick if they don't go for regular doctor visits or get their regular health care services.

The Australian Government has provided funding to help you see your doctor and get medicines from home. Talk to your doctor about this. Many doctors are also using phone and video calls instead of face-to-face appointments. Please call your doctor to discuss this.

Should I avoid visitors?

There may continue to be limits on the number of visitors that you can have in your home. These limits do not apply to carers, support workers or other people who provide essential services to you.

How can I protect myself if I share a house with others?

If you live in supported accommodation or a group home, do these extra things to help reduce the risk of COVID-19:

- Place seats in shared areas 1.5 metres (two big steps) apart.
- Don't spend more than 15 minutes with other people in a small space.
- Plan when you and the people you live with will use shared spaces, so you are not all there at the same time.
- Make sure someone is cleaning or disinfecting things that get touched often.
- Think about cooking meals at different times, so the kitchen is not crowded with people.
- Make sure towels and linen are washed often.

What to do if your carer gets sick?

Call your regular service provider if your family member, friend or carer helping you gets sick and can't care for you, or you need extra help. If you don't have a regular service provider, call the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has changed the way people with disability and an NDIS plan can access support. Call the NDIA on 1800 800 110.

Where can I access support?

If you need help you can contact:

- the Disability Information Helpline on 1800 643 787
- Queensland Health on 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- 000 if it is an emergency
- TTY on 133 677 if you have a hearing, visual and/or speech impairment.
- call 000 in an emergency. If you have a sensory disability you can call 000 via the National Relay Service. Details can be found on the website for the Australian Government, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (<https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service/emergency-calls-000>).

Information for Carers

Can I leave home to care for someone?

Carers, support workers and volunteers provide essential services and can continue to deliver care. If you are providing informal support, you can continue to do so as long as you follow the guidelines for social distancing wherever possible.

What do I do if I feel sick?

If you are a paid support worker, you must not provide care and must alert your employer if:

- you have returned from overseas in the last 14 days
- you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19
- you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny or blocked nose

- you are considered vulnerable to more serious COVID-19 outcomes (those aged 70 years and over, those aged 65 years and older with an existing illness, or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders aged 50 years or older).

Do not provide care for a friend or family member if you are sick.

If you provide informal support to a person with disability and you are sick call the Community Recovery Hotline 1800 173 349 for help.

How can I get training in infection control?

Carers and support workers can access free online training about infection control for COVID-19 to reduce the risk of infection to you, your client or loved ones. This training is available on the Australian Government Department of Health website.

What steps can I take to ensure a group living home is safe?

The Queenslanders with Disability Network, or QDN, website has information and a planning template that carers can use to help people with disability plan for staying at home for a long period, or if someone who supports them gets COVID-19.