

Practice Alert Quick Reference Guide

Prevention of respiratory infections

Respiratory infections affect the parts of your body that help you breathe: your nose, throat and lungs.

## Who is susceptible?

Respiratory infections and diseases are a leading cause of poor health and death in people with disability. In Australia, respiratory infections and diseases contribute to up to half of deaths of people using disability services.

## What health conditions could increase risk?

Some contributing factors that can increase the risk of respiratory infection and diseases include: swallowing problems (Dysphagia), gastro oesophageal reflux disease, sleep apnoea, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

## What can be done to reduce the risk?

Good respiratory health involves supporting people with disability to have access to influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations, medication reviews and health checks.

## What are the signs of respiratory infection?

Physical and behavioural changes that may indicate respiratory infection include: difficulty breathing, noisy breathing or wheezing, a persistent cough and coughing up mucus or blood.

It is important that NDIS providers support NDIS participants to immediately access medical advice if they notice any signs of respiratory infection.

## Ongoing care

NDIS providers are required to monitor NDIS participants’ ongoing health, safety and wellbeing and support participants to maintain their health and to access appropriate health services when required.

## Find out more

For full details on this practice alert and the obligations for NDIS support workers, and access to other training and resources, please visit [ndiscommission.gov.au/workerresources](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/workerresources)