Disaster Tips: Pandemics

Helping you avoid the bug

Know The Risks

Weaker Immune Systems: Some disabilities or medications make it harder for your body to fight off infections.

Support Worker Gaps: If your support workers get sick, your regular shifts might be cancelled with little notice.

Supply Shortages: Shops may run out of food, medication, or cleaning supplies if people panic-buy.

Isolation: Lockdowns or staying home to stay safe can lead to loneliness, anxiety, and sensory deprivation.

Be Prepared

The 4-Week Supply: Aim to have at least 4 weeks of your regular medication on hand.

Support Worker Backup Plan: Create a list of people you trust who could help you if a support worker is sick. Also talk to your Support Coordinator about a "Plan B" for short-notice workers.

Food & Essentials: Keep a stock of non-perishable food and toiletries.

Cleaning Supplies: Stock up on hand sanitiser, disinfectant wipes, and soap.

Protecting Yourself

Hand Hygiene: Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Mask Up: Wear a well-fitted mask in crowded indoor spaces, on public transport, or when visiting hospitals/clinics.

Vaccinations: Stay up to date with recommended vaccines.

Ventilation: Open windows and doors when visitors are inside to let fresh air circulate and blow germs away.

Stay Home if unwell: If you feel sick, cancel in-person supports and switch to phone or video check-ins.

If Your Support Worker is Sick

The "Symptom Check": Ask your support worker to screen themselves before they come to your home.

Rapid Tests: Keep a box of rapid antigen tests at home. If your worker feels unwell, ask them to test before entering.

Essential vs. Non-Essential: If you have limited support, prioritise the essential tasks (personal care, medication, meals) and postpone non-essential outings or chores.

Communication: Ask your provider to send a different worker if yours is sick. Give them as much notice as you can.

If You Get Sick

Isolate: Stay in one room away from others in your home (if possible). Use a separate bathroom if you can.

Contact Your GP: Call your doctor to get advice on medication or treatment.

Tell Your Provider: Let your support coordinator and regular workers know immediately so they can adjust your supports.

Monitor Your Symptoms: Watch for trouble breathing, persistent chest pain, or confusion. If these happen, call 000.

Hydrate & Rest: Drink plenty of water and rest as much as possible. Do not push yourself to do chores or activities.

Mental Health & Coping

Being stuck at home for weeks can be really hard on your mind.

Routine is Key: Keep a daily schedule (wake up, meals, activities, bedtime). Structure helps reduce anxiety.

Stay Connected: Schedule regular phone calls or video chats with friends, family, or peer support groups.

Sensory Comforts: Have your comfort items nearby: noise-cancelling headphones, weighted blankets, fidget toys, or favourite music.

Limit News: Watching the news 24/7 increases stress. Check updates once or twice a day, then switch off.

Move Your Body: If you can, do gentle stretches, chair exercises, or breathing exercises to release tension.

Staying Informed

Rumours spread fast during pandemics. Only trust official sources.

Health Department Website: Check your state/territory health website for daily case numbers and rules.

NDIS Alerts: The NDIS Commission sends out updates for participants and providers, read these when they arrive.

Your GP: Always ask your doctor for medical advice, not social media.