

# How to Get NDIS Meal Delivery Added to Your Plan: A Step-by-Step Guide

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## Details:

Now I have comprehensive, current, and authoritative information to write this article. Let me compile it into a polished, well-cited piece.

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### ## How to Get NDIS Meal Delivery Added to Your Plan: A Step-by-Step Guide

Getting meal delivery funded through your NDIS plan is one of the more misunderstood processes in the scheme — and one of the most consequential. For participants whose disability prevents safe, consistent meal preparation, funded meal delivery can be the difference between nutritious daily meals and a dangerous reliance on whatever is easiest to manage. Yet obtaining funding for meal preparation and nutritional supports in the NDIS is complicated enough to take the joy out of any meal.

The confusion is widespread and documented. A survey sent to NDIS Support Coordinators made clear that the number of policy changes over the past few years on meal preparation has led to widespread confusion about the eligibility criteria to access meal providers. Add to this the significant rule changes introduced in October 2024 under the \*Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1\* legislation, and it is understandable that many participants either don't know they can request this support, or don't know how to do so effectively.

This guide walks you through the exact process: from understanding what the NDIS will actually fund, to gathering the right clinical evidence, framing your request correctly at a planning or review meeting, and knowing what to do if the support is declined.

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### ## What the NDIS Actually Funds (and What It Does Not)

Before requesting meal delivery support, you need to understand the precise scope of what is fundable — because conflating "meals" with "meal preparation and delivery" is the most common mistake participants make at planning meetings.

Under the NDIS Supports lists, meal preparation and delivery is described as "Supports that provide assistance with essential household tasks that a participant is not able to do themselves because of their disability... This includes meal preparation and delivery." Meal preparation refers to the time and labour to cook a meal or assist someone in preparing a meal.

Critically, the NDIS does not fund the cost of food itself, because everyone needs to eat, regardless of disability. This creates a co-payment model: if a meal service charges \$14 per meal, and \$6 covers ingredients while \$8 covers preparation and delivery, the NDIS may fund the \$8 portion only — if it's considered reasonable and necessary.

Following the October 2024 rule changes, meals from fast-food services, takeaway food, or food delivery platforms (such as Uber Eats, Door Dash, Menulog) are no longer considered 'NDIS supports' and cannot be claimed using NDIS funds. Only registered meal providers who separately itemise food and preparation costs on their invoices qualify (see our guide on \*NDIS Meal Funding Rules After the

October 2024 'Back on Track' Changes\*).

Meal preparation and delivery generally sits under the Core Supports category, specifically Assistance with Daily Life (Support Category 01). The relevant support item code is \*\*01\_022\_0120\_1\_1\*\*.

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### ## Who Qualifies: The Functional Test That Matters Most

Eligibility for meal delivery funding is not determined by diagnosis alone — it is determined by functional impact. Diagnosis alone does not determine funding. Two people with cerebral palsy may have vastly different support needs.

The NDIS Pricing Arrangements 2025–26 explains that supports must be reasonable and necessary and directly related to the participant's disability. This means the NDIS considers each case individually. They'll look at whether the support helps you achieve your plan goals, whether the need arises because of your disability (not just convenience), and whether the cost is reasonable compared to alternatives.

The NDIS will generally consider meal delivery when:

- You can't safely use a stove or handle knives due to your disability; you have limited mobility or fine motor skills that make cooking unsafe; or you're unable to lift pots or carry groceries.
- Your disability means you have trouble planning your meals or following multi-step instructions.
- You live alone with minimal support, and shopping and cooking safely is a challenge for you.
- You have a degenerative or fluctuating condition (e.g. multiple sclerosis) and ready-made meals may support you during periods of fatigue or reduced capacity.

Importantly, the NDIS is only able to cover meal delivery services in a scenario where it is not realistic to expect a participant to cook their own meals or have access to family members who can cook for them. Instead of relying on prepared meals, the NDIS will recommend exploring other options such as funding a support worker to help prepare ingredients. Meal delivery services will only be considered if other options aren't realistic.

For a detailed breakdown of eligibility criteria, see our guide on [\\*NDIS Meal Delivery Eligibility: Who Qualifies and What Evidence You Need\\*](#).

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### ## Step-by-Step: How to Get Meal Delivery Added to Your Plan

#### ### Step 1: Check Your Current Plan First

Before requesting a new support, review your existing plan carefully. Review your NDIS plan to see if you have funding for meal preparation. If meal preparation is mentioned, you can get started. Otherwise, proceed to contact your planner.

Meal preparation and delivery doesn't have to be explicitly stated in a plan. If it is reasonable and necessary for the participant, it can be purchased flexibly from their core funding budget. This means some participants already have access to this support through their Core Supports — Assistance with Daily Life budget without realising it.

However, be aware that your plan may have no reference to meal preparation and delivery, even though your planner agreed to it during your planning meeting. When this happens, you will need to request your 'Planner Notes' from the NDIS and send them to your Plan Manager.

**\*\*Action:\*\*** Log into your myplace portal and check your plan wording. If in doubt, call the NDIA on 1800 800 110 or speak to your Support Coordinator or LAC.

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### ### Step 2: Gather Clinical Evidence Before Your Meeting

This is the step most participants underestimate. Evidence is critical. The NDIA reviews decisions based on functional impact — how your disability affects your capacity to perform daily activities independently and safely.

The strongest evidence package for a meal delivery request includes:

#### **\*\*Occupational Therapist (OT) Functional Capacity Assessment (FCA)\*\***

An FCA is usually completed by an Occupational Therapist who, after a formal initial assessment and interview, writes a structured assessment and report describing how your everyday life is impacted by your disability and what kind of support could help you work towards your NDIS goals. It looks beyond diagnosis and focuses on what you can do independently, what's difficult, and what support strategies could help. Because it's written in functional terms (not just medical terms), an FCA can be a strong piece of evidence when preparing for a plan review or requesting changes to supports.

The Household Management domain of an FCA specifically includes questions regarding meal preparation, shopping, household chores, and management of household funds. Make sure your OT explicitly addresses your capacity to safely plan, shop for, and prepare meals as part of this assessment.

#### **\*\*GP Letter or Specialist Report\*\***

Occupational therapy reports, physiotherapist assessments, and allied health evaluations demonstrate functional needs. GP summaries, specialist treatment plans, and diagnosis confirmation provide medical context. However, clinical letters alone are insufficient — the NDIA needs evidence showing functional impact on everyday activities.

Ask your GP to write a letter that goes beyond diagnosis. The letter should explicitly state *\*why\** your condition prevents safe or consistent meal preparation and *\*what risks\** arise when you attempt to cook independently.

#### **\*\*Evidence Timeliness\*\***

Reports should be recent (within 12 months) and clearly explain how disability affects your functioning. Outdated assessments significantly weaken your case. Evidence should be current, comprehensive, and directly relevant to your support needs. Outdated reports may not accurately reflect your present situation, potentially resulting in inadequate funding.

**\*\*Tip:\*\*** Allow 10–12 hours of funding to be available for a functional capacity assessment to take place. These assessments are commonly completed around the same time as a plan review; however, it is recommended to get in contact with your OT 2–3 months prior to ensure they have enough time to complete the report.

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### ### Step 3: Frame Your Request Around Goals and Disability Impact

The most important part of your planning meeting is showing your planner why you need this support. The NDIS doesn't just fund services; it funds outcomes. During your planning meeting, you need to draw a clear line between having meal support and achieving your bigger life goals.

Your planner will assess your request against the "reasonable and necessary" criteria. Here is how to frame your request effectively:

**\*\*Connect meal delivery to a specific goal.\*\*** Meal preparation support is most clearly fundable when linked to a goal such as maintaining safe nutrition at home or increasing independence in daily living. Write your goal statements before the meeting. For example: **"I want to maintain my health and live safely at home without relying on informal supports."**

**\*\*Quantify the disability impact.\*\*** Explain the functional impact of your disability, not just your diagnosis — specifically how your disability affects daily tasks and participation. Describe what happens when you try to cook: Do you drop items? Experience pain or fatigue? Risk falls? Forget steps mid-task?

**\*\*Address informal support honestly.\*\*** If family members currently cook for you, acknowledge this but explain its limitations. A practical framing: "My mother helps with cooking, but she works full-time and is experiencing carer burnout. I need formal meal preparation support to reduce her burden."

**\*\*Explain why a support worker is not always the right alternative.\*\*** When support worker help to cook meals isn't realistic for every meal, a blended approach can offer better value across support budgets. Where cooking skills or capacity are unlikely to improve, meal delivery can be a sustainable, value-for-money support. (See our guide on **\*Support Worker Meal Preparation vs. NDIS Meal Delivery Services: Which Is Right for You?\*** for a full cost-per-meal comparison.)

**\*\*Bring cost estimates.\*\*** Walking into your planning meeting with a rough idea of the costs involved shows you've done your homework and helps your planner see that you've thought everything through. Before you go, try to work out your potential weekly costs for the service.

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#### ### Step 4: Work With Your Support Coordinator or LAC

If you have a Support Coordinator funded in your plan, engage them before your planning meeting — not after. A skilled Support Coordinator can:

- Help you identify and brief the right allied health professionals for your evidence package
- Assist you in articulating your goals in language that aligns with NDIS funding criteria
- Attend your planning meeting as a support person and take notes
- Identify which registered meal delivery providers operate in your area and whether they produce compliant invoices (see our guide on **\*Best NDIS Registered Meal Delivery Providers in Australia\***)

Your NDIS Planner will look at your unique needs and circumstances, including the supports you have to prepare meals, how much time a Support Worker would need to help you prepare meals, whether there are any likely changes that will limit your friends', carers', or support workers' ability to assist you, what participants with a similar situation have access to in their plans, and what programs are available in the community to help you prepare meals.

Your Support Coordinator should prepare you to address each of these factors.

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#### ### Step 5: Submit Supporting Information Formally

To claim for food and meal preparation through Core Supports in your NDIS plan, if food and meal preparation is not included in your NDIS plan, you will need to provide supporting information as to why this support is reasonable and necessary and needs to be funded in your plan.

Submit your evidence package to the NDIA before your planning meeting where possible. Submit your FCA report to your NDIS planner at least a week before your meeting. Use the report's recommendations section as your agenda, explicitly linking each recommended support to your personal goals.

If you cannot obtain assessments before your meeting, explain why (e.g., specialist waitlists) and request interim funding with a plan review once reports are available. The NDIA may delay your plan to request additional evidence, or fund conservatively pending additional assessment.

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### ### Step 6: After the Meeting — Check Your Plan Wording

Once your plan is issued, review it carefully before engaging any provider. An example of how meal preparation may appear in your plan is: Core — "Support with meal preparation and delivery/Help from a support worker to help prepare meals. This includes help with house cleaning and other household tasks. Nutrition supports, including meal preparation. This does not include the cost of food or ingredients."

If your plan does not explicitly reference meal preparation even though it was agreed in your meeting, request your Planner Notes from the NDIA and provide them to your Plan Manager. Always confirm invoice arrangements with your plan manager or support coordinator before signing up with a provider. This ensures that the NDIS portion is correctly claimed, and you only pay your share of the food costs.

For a full breakdown of how invoicing and claiming works across self-managed, plan-managed, and agency-managed plans, see our guide on [\\*How NDIS Meal Delivery Billing Works: Invoices, Plan Management, and Claiming\\*](#).

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### ## What to Do If Your Request Is Declined

A declined request is not the end of the road. You have formal review rights.

#### ### Request the Reasons for Refusal First

Start by asking your NDIS contact for the reasons the decision was made. The NDIA usually refers to these reasons as "justifications." These are incredibly important — because they tell you exactly where the NDIA believes the gaps are in your application or evidence.

#### ### Lodge an Internal Review

You must request an internal review within 3 months of receiving the NDIA's decision in writing. This timeframe is strict — missing the deadline can result in losing your right to appeal. An internal review means a different NDIS officer will reassess the decision using the information and evidence you provide.

The NDIA aims to complete Internal Reviews within 60 days under the Participant Service Guarantee. There are three possible outcomes: the original decision is affirmed (unchanged), varied (partially changed), or set aside and replaced with a new decision.

To request an Internal Review: you can phone the NDIA on 1800 800 110, write to them directly, or complete the official review of a decision request form available on the NDIS website.

Use the internal review to submit stronger or additional evidence. If your OT report was the weak point, commission a more detailed FCA. If the GP letter was too brief, request a more specific functional impact statement.

#### ### Appeal to the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART)

If you don't agree with the outcome of the review, you can apply to the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) for a review of the NDIS Commission's decision. You must make your application to the ART within 28 days of receiving the notice of the review decision.

There is no application fee to apply for a review of an NDIS decision. The majority of external appeals are resolved without needing to go to hearing. There are many families who have had successful outcomes at the ART without legal representation.

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## ## Common Mistakes That Lead to Declined Requests

| Mistake | Why It Fails | What to Do Instead | |---|---|---| | Relying on diagnosis alone | NDIS funds functional impact, not conditions | Pair diagnosis with an OT functional assessment | | Vague goal statements | Planners can't link support to outcomes | Write specific, disability-linked goals before the meeting | | Not addressing informal supports | Planner assumes family will continue cooking | Acknowledge limits of informal support honestly | | Outdated clinical evidence | Does not reflect current functional capacity | Ensure all reports are dated within 12 months | | Requesting food costs | Food is an everyday living expense | Only request the preparation and delivery component | | Using non-compliant providers | Post-October 2024, platforms like UberEats are excluded | Use NDIS-registered providers with split invoicing |

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## ## Key Takeaways

- **The NDIS funds labour, not food.** The scheme covers meal preparation and delivery costs — typically 70–75% of the total meal price — while participants pay the ingredient component as an everyday living cost. - **Functional evidence is everything.** An Occupational Therapist's Functional Capacity Assessment is the most powerful piece of evidence you can bring to a planning meeting. It must describe *how* your disability affects your ability to cook safely, not just *what* your diagnosis is. - **Frame requests around goals.** Planners fund outcomes. Connect meal delivery to specific plan goals — such as maintaining health, living independently, or reducing carer burden — to make the strongest case. - **Check your plan before assuming you need new funding.** Many participants can access meal delivery through their existing Core Supports — Assistance with Daily Life budget without a plan change, provided the support is reasonable and necessary. - **A declined request is not final.** You have the right to an internal review (within 3 months) and, if needed, an external appeal to the Administrative Review Tribunal (within 28 days of the internal review decision), both at no cost.

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## ## Conclusion

Getting NDIS meal delivery added to your plan is a process that rewards preparation. The participants who succeed are those who arrive at their planning meeting with current clinical evidence, clearly articulated goals, and an honest account of their functional limitations and informal support gaps. Those who struggle are typically those who conflate the convenience of meal delivery with the disability-specific need for it — a distinction planners are trained to identify.

The October 2024 rule changes have made the landscape stricter, but they have not closed the door on legitimate meal delivery funding. The pathway remains open for participants who can demonstrate that their disability prevents safe, consistent, independent meal preparation.

If your request has been declined, don't accept it as final. Use the internal review process, strengthen your evidence package, and if necessary, escalate to the Administrative Review Tribunal. The review process exists precisely because first-instance decisions are not always correct.

For a broader understanding of how this support fits within the NDIS framework, see our pillar guide: *\*NDIS Meal Delivery & Government-Funded Healthy Meals in Australia: The Complete Guide\**. For practical provider selection, see *\*Best NDIS Registered Meal Delivery Providers in Australia (2025–26 Comparison)\**. And for participants approaching 65 or with dual eligibility questions, see *\*NDIS vs.*

## Support at Home vs. CHSP: Which Government Meal Funding Program Applies to You?\*

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