Dietitian Support Under the NDIS: What It Can Help With

Canonical: https://bloom-healthcare.com.au/blog/dietitian-support-under-the-ndis/

Details:

The NDIS funds the dietitian's professional time and expertise. It does not fund the food. That single line explains most of the confusion families have about nutrition funding. The scheme pays an Accredited Practising Dietitian to assess, plan, teach, coach your support team and report on progress, and it can pay a support worker to help you shop and cook, but groceries, supplements and meal delivery remain everyday living costs you pay yourself. This page sets out the funding boundaries and the professional ones, including where dietetics ends and speech pathology begins.

If you want the step-by-step of asking for this support and what sessions feel like, that is covered in getting a dietitian into your NDIS plan . This page is about what is covered, by which budget, and where the edges are.

The core distinction: expertise is funded, food is not

The NDIS funds supports that are reasonable and necessary because of a person's disability. A support meets that test when it relates to the disability, helps the person pursue their goals and take part in daily life, represents value for money, and is likely to be effective and beneficial.

Food fails that test on its own terms. Everyone has to eat, whether or not they have a disability, so groceries are an ordinary living cost. What is not ordinary is needing a clinician to work out why a disability is stopping you from eating enough, or needing a written plan a support worker can follow so that mealtimes stop going wrong.

So the funded thing is professional intervention and skill building around nutrition, not the food itself. The NDIA's own description of nutrition supports covers a dietitian creating a meal plan, support to follow that meal plan, and help to plan, shop for and prepare meals where disability makes those tasks difficult. Read that carefully and you will notice every item is somebody's time.

Which budget pays for a dietitian

There is more than one answer, and which one applies depends on what the support is doing rather than who is delivering it.

Capacity Building: Improved Daily Living

This is the usual home for dietitian services. Improved Daily Living is a Capacity Building category, which means it funds supports that build skills and independence rather than supports that do things for you. Dietitian work funded here includes:

assessment and nutrition planning

therapeutic nutrition intervention

education about meal planning

support to follow a meal plan

help with planning, shopping for and preparing meals where disability makes those tasks difficult

skill development in cooking, shopping and food safety

mealtime management and swallowing strategies worked out alongside a speech pathologist

NDIA guidance treats therapy supports as sitting in Improved Daily Living Skills, and this funding can be stated in a plan for therapy supports.

Capacity Building: Improved Health and Wellbeing

The second Capacity Building option. It is used where the emphasis is nutrition education, health-related eating support, behaviour-informed coaching, or weight management tied to a health outcome, rather than daily living skills. The two categories overlap in practice. Which one your plan holds matters more than which one seems tidier, so check the plan before assuming.

Core Supports: Assistance with Daily Life

Core Supports pays for a person to help you, not for a clinician to teach you. Meal preparation assistance and help at mealtimes can be funded here where a participant needs another person to manage eating. If the real problem is that nobody is cooking, Core Supports may be the answer rather than more therapy hours. If the problem is that nobody knows what should be cooked or how to make it safe, that is a dietitian question.

Disability-related health supports

The NDIA's disability-related health support guidance includes nutrition supports, meal preparation among them. This category recognises that a disability can create health-related nutrition barriers needing specialised support, and it sits between everyday assistance and therapy.

Stated supports

Some plans allocate funding as stated supports, which means a specific amount is reserved for a specific type of therapy and cannot be moved elsewhere. Nutrition support can be stated within a Capacity Building budget. If yours is stated, you have less flexibility to shift funds but a clearer guarantee that the money is there.

What is claimable within a dietitian's time

A dietitian's claimable work is broader than the appointment itself.

Initial assessment. The comprehensive first consultation that establishes the baseline and links nutrition needs to your NDIS goals.

Follow-up sessions. Implementation and troubleshooting: adjusting the plan to real routines, building practical strategies for shopping and cooking, writing scripts for support workers, tracking what has changed.

Telehealth. Video or phone consultations, an approved delivery method for participants across self-managed, plan-managed and NDIA-managed arrangements.

Home visits and community sessions. Including day programs, supported employment sites and community health locations.

Report writing. Assessment reports, progress summaries and documentation for plan reassessment are billable work, and the time varies with the detail and the recommendations required.

Education and coaching for families, support workers and group home staff.

Travel is billable under the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits where it applies. The specific arrangements for your services, including travel and cancellations, belong in the service agreement you sign, not in a blog post. Ask for them in writing or call 1300 771 465 .

What the NDIS does not fund

This is the part worth being blunt about, because the wrong assumption here leads to invoices nobody can claim.

Food and groceries for general consumption. Ordinary living cost.

Supplements bought as standalone nutrition products. Not funded as a general rule.

Meal delivery for routine meal provision. Providing meals is not a disability support in itself.

Anything not linked to disability. Weight loss advice unrelated to disability impact, general wellness coaching or a diet you would like to try does not meet the reasonable and necessary test.

There are situations where a support that looks like an everyday cost is funded because disability creates an additional expense, but that determination sits with the NDIA and depends on your circumstances. Do not assume. Ask your planner or support coordinator, or call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 .

Who can deliver claimable dietitian services

Only an Accredited Practising Dietitian registered with Dietitians Australia can deliver claimable dietitian services under the NDIS. This is not a preference. It determines whether an invoice is payable.

APD is not the same as nutritionist

A dietitian is a university-qualified health professional trained to assess, diagnose and treat dietary and nutritional problems at both an individual and a public-health level. Dietitians can provide medical nutrition therapy and are qualified to work with complex health needs. "Nutritionist" is not a regulated title in Australia, training varies, and the advice is generally more general. For NDIS claiming purposes the distinction is decisive: APD or the service is not claimable.

Dietitians Australia is the professional body that awards and maintains the APD credential. It sits outside AHPRA and self-regulates, setting the standards, requiring ongoing professional development, and accrediting the dietitians who are eligible to provide NDIS-funded services.

APD is also not the same as NDIS provider registration

These are two separate credentials and they do different jobs.

APD is held by the individual clinician. It is required for dietitian services to be claimable under the NDIS regardless of how your plan is managed.

NDIS provider registration is held by the organisation, not the individual, and lasts three years. It demonstrates that the provider meets the scheme's standards and compliance requirements.

If you are NDIA-managed , the provider organisation must hold NDIS registration. If you are self-managed or plan-managed , the APD credential is the primary requirement, and you have a wider choice of provider. Ask both questions before you start.

How plan management changes things

Self-managed. You coordinate and pay for services directly, and you have the most flexibility about who you use. You keep the records.

Plan-managed. A plan manager handles the financial administration: processing invoices, paying providers, tracking budgets and giving you statements. Plan-managed participants follow the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits.

NDIA-managed. The agency manages payments and you must use registered providers. NDIA-managed participants also follow the NDIS Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits.

Registered providers charge within the published NDIS price limits, and the NDIA reviews and publishes those limits annually. A service agreement should state the arrangements plainly before services begin.

Where dietetics ends and speech pathology begins

This is the boundary that matters most clinically, and getting it wrong is a safety problem rather than a paperwork problem.

Swallowing safety belongs to speech pathology

A speech pathologist assesses swallowing function, works out the nature and severity of the swallowing impairment, and determines whether eating and drinking are safe. From that assessment come the recommendations: which food textures and fluid consistencies are safe, how the person should be positioned, what strategies reduce risk, and what exercises may strengthen the muscles involved in swallowing. The speech pathologist also writes the mealtime management plan and trains the people who will follow it.

Nutritional adequacy within those recommendations belongs to dietetics

Once the textures are set, someone has to make sure the person is still getting enough. Modified diets can quietly reduce energy and nutrient intake, and thickened fluids can reduce how much someone drinks. The dietitian works inside the speech pathologist's recommendations to keep nutrition and hydration adequate, fortify meals where energy density is a problem, manage hydration, and give carers practical guidance on preparing modified meals.

The short version: the speech pathologist decides what is safe to swallow, the dietitian makes sure what is safe is also enough. Neither replaces the other, and a dietitian should not be overriding a swallowing recommendation.

Mealtime management plans

A swallowing assessment and mealtime management plan is a body of work rather than a single appointment. It typically involves assessment across more than one setting, liaison with family, carers and support workers, report writing, the plan itself, and staff training so the people at the table can follow it safely. Budget for it accordingly when you are planning therapy funding, and ask your provider what it will involve in your case.

Where dietetics ends and other supports begin

Occupational therapy covers the sensory, environmental and routine side of mealtimes: modifying the home setup, assistive equipment for eating, establishing routines, and supporting people with sensory processing differences. Where feeding is complex, OT often builds the conditions in which a dietitian's

plan becomes possible. Bloom's occupational therapy service works alongside dietetics on exactly this.

Exercise physiology and physiotherapy cover physical conditioning, strength, endurance and mobility. A dietitian may work on stabilising weight and improving energy intake while exercise physiology builds the capacity to use that energy. They run in parallel; neither substitutes for the other.

Support workers implement. They prepare meals to the plan, monitor intake, keep the approach consistent across home, day program and supported accommodation, and report back what is actually happening. They are not qualified to assess nutrition or change a meal plan on their own, and they should not be asked to. Their consistency is what makes the plan work.

Personal care assistance with eating is direct support, funded through Core Supports rather than therapy budgets.

NDIS dietetics is not aged care nutrition support

These are different schemes with different rules, and a rule from one does not transfer to the other.

Under the NDIS, dietetics is a therapy support inside Capacity Building. It is goal-linked, outcome-focused, aimed at building independence and skills, and it must be delivered by an APD for the service to be claimable.

In aged care, nutrition support is framed as a clinical support delivered within an aged care program, generally emphasising maintenance and management of age-related conditions within a broader care team rather than skill building against NDIS goals. Eligibility, funding and the rules for who can deliver it are set by the aged care system, not the NDIS.

If you are over 65 or moving between systems, do not carry an NDIS assumption across. Ask which scheme you are actually in before you plan services.

Fees, travel and cancellations

These are commercial terms, not policy, and they belong in your service agreement. Bloom provides a service agreement after a referral that sets out pricing within NDIS price limits, consultation schedules and how the team will communicate with you and your supports. Do not rely on figures quoted anywhere else, including on comparison sites. Ask for the agreement, read it before you sign, and call 1300 771 465 with questions.

Access

Bloom Healthcare's Accredited Practising Dietitians provide assessment, nutrition planning, texture-modified and fortified meal advice, tube feeding and tube weaning strategies, selective eating and sensory aversion strategies, budget-aware meal planning, skill building around shopping, cooking and food safety, and education for support workers and carers. Delivery is by home visit, telehealth, clinic appointment, or in community settings including day programs and supported employment sites.

Coverage spans New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. Bloom works with self-managed, plan-managed and NDIA-managed participants, subject to registration requirements.

Phone 1300 771 465

Email hello@bloom-healthcare.com.au

Make a referral or read more on the dietitian service page

A member of the team will be in touch within 24 hours of a referral. Referrals come from participants, families and carers, support coordinators, plan managers, GPs, paediatricians, supported independent

living providers, schools with consent, and allied health clinicians.

Common questions about NDIS dietitian funding and scope

Will the NDIS pay for my groceries if I have a special diet?

No. Food and groceries for general consumption are everyday living costs and are not funded. What can be funded is the dietitian's time to design a plan that works within your budget, and support to shop and prepare meals if disability makes those tasks difficult. If you believe your disability creates an additional and unavoidable food cost, raise it with your planner rather than assuming either way.

Are supplements or formula covered?

Supplements bought as standalone nutrition products are not funded as a general rule. Where a product is part of a clinical regime such as enteral feeding, the position depends on your circumstances and on decisions made by the NDIA and the health system. Confirm with your planner or call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 before you commit to a cost.

Which budget line should a dietitian invoice against?

Most often Capacity Building, Improved Daily Living. Improved Health and Wellbeing applies where the work is nutrition education or health-related eating support. Meal preparation assistance by a support worker sits under Core Supports. Your plan determines what is available to you, so check it, or ask your plan manager.

Can I see a dietitian who is not an Accredited Practising Dietitian?

You can see whoever you like privately, but only an APD registered with Dietitians Australia can deliver claimable dietitian services under the NDIS. If you are NDIA-managed, the provider organisation also needs NDIS registration. Ask about both before booking.

Is a nutritionist the same thing?

No. Nutritionist is not a regulated title in Australia and training varies. Dietitians are university-qualified, meet Dietitians Australia standards, and are qualified to provide medical nutrition therapy in complex care. For NDIS claiming, the APD credential is what counts.

My child has swallowing difficulties. Do I need a dietitian or a speech pathologist?

Usually both, in that order. The speech pathologist assesses swallowing safety and sets the texture and fluid recommendations, and the dietitian works within those recommendations to keep nutrition and hydration adequate. Bloom provides speech pathology alongside dietetics so the two align.

Can a dietitian change my child's texture level?

No. Texture and fluid recommendations for swallowing safety come from the speech pathologist who assessed the swallow. A dietitian works inside those recommendations. If a texture level needs to change, that is a speech pathology review.

Does report writing come out of my therapy funding?

Yes. Report writing is billable clinical work and its time varies with the detail required. It is also the documentation that supports your next plan, so it is rarely wasted. Ask your provider up front roughly how much reporting time a plan reassessment report will take.

Can dietitian support be delivered by telehealth and still be claimed?

Yes. Telehealth is an approved delivery method across self-managed, plan-managed and NDIA-managed arrangements. It suits participants in regional and remote areas and anyone for whom travel is a barrier. Home visits remain stronger for anything involving the kitchen.

What if my plan has no dietitian funding at all?

Raise it at your next plan reassessment with functional evidence, or speak to your support coordinator about a change of circumstances if the need is new and urgent. Bloom can provide quotes and supporting information. Call 1300 771 465.

How much is a session, and what happens if I cancel late?

Fees, travel charges and cancellation terms sit in the service agreement you sign before services start and depend on your plan management and setting. Ask for them in writing rather than relying on any figure quoted elsewhere. Call 1300 771 465.

I am over 65. Does any of this apply to me?

Not directly. NDIS access requires being under 65 at the time of the access request. Nutrition support for older Australians runs through the aged care system, which has its own eligibility and funding rules, and NDIS categories do not carry across. My Aged Care is the starting point for that pathway.

Will the NDIS pay for my groceries if I have a special diet?

No. Food and groceries for general consumption are everyday living costs and are not funded. What can be funded is the dietitian's time to design a plan that works within your budget, and support to shop and prepare meals if disability makes those tasks difficult. If you believe your disability creates an additional and unavoidable food cost, raise it with your planner rather than assuming either way.

Are supplements or formula covered?

Supplements bought as standalone nutrition products are not funded as a general rule. Where a product is part of a clinical regime such as enteral feeding, the position depends on your circumstances and on decisions made by the NDIA and the health system. Confirm with your planner or call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 before you commit to a cost.

Which budget line should a dietitian invoice against?

Most often Capacity Building, Improved Daily Living. Improved Health and Wellbeing applies where the work is nutrition education or health-related eating support. Meal preparation assistance by a support worker sits under Core Supports. Your plan determines what is available to you, so check it, or ask your plan manager.

Can I see a dietitian who is not an Accredited Practising Dietitian?

You can see whoever you like privately, but only an APD registered with Dietitians Australia can deliver claimable dietitian services under the NDIS. If you are NDIA-managed, the provider organisation also needs NDIS registration. Ask about both before booking.

Is a nutritionist the same thing?

No. Nutritionist is not a regulated title in Australia and training varies. Dietitians are university-qualified, meet Dietitians Australia standards, and are qualified to provide medical nutrition therapy in complex care. For NDIS claiming, the APD credential is what counts.

My child has swallowing difficulties. Do I need a dietitian or a speech pathologist?

Usually both, in that order. The speech pathologist assesses swallowing safety and sets the texture and fluid recommendations, and the dietitian works within those recommendations to keep nutrition and hydration adequate. Bloom provides speech pathology alongside dietetics so the two align.

Can a dietitian change my child's texture level?

No. Texture and fluid recommendations for swallowing safety come from the speech pathologist who assessed the swallow. A dietitian works inside those recommendations. If a texture level needs to change, that is a speech pathology review.

Does report writing come out of my therapy funding?

Yes. Report writing is billable clinical work and its time varies with the detail required. It is also the documentation that supports your next plan, so it is rarely wasted. Ask your provider up front roughly how much reporting time a plan reassessment report will take.

Can dietitian support be delivered by telehealth and still be claimed?

Yes. Telehealth is an approved delivery method across self-managed, plan-managed and NDIA-managed arrangements. It suits participants in regional and remote areas and anyone for whom travel is a barrier. Home visits remain stronger for anything involving the kitchen.

What if my plan has no dietitian funding at all?

Raise it at your next plan reassessment with functional evidence, or speak to your support coordinator about a change of circumstances if the need is new and urgent. Bloom can provide quotes and supporting information. Call 1300 771 465.

How much is a session, and what happens if I cancel late?

Fees, travel charges and cancellation terms sit in the service agreement you sign before services start and depend on your plan management and setting. Ask for them in writing rather than relying on any figure quoted elsewhere. Call 1300 771 465.

I am over 65. Does any of this apply to me?

Not directly. NDIS access requires being under 65 at the time of the access request. Nutrition support for older Australians runs through the aged care system, which has its own eligibility and funding rules, and NDIS categories do not carry across. My Aged Care is the starting point for that pathway.