



National Disability Coordination Officer Program  
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

## Working effectively with people with a chronic medical condition

### What is a chronic medical condition?

- A wide range of medical conditions may impact on a person's work and require reasonable adjustment
- Chronic medical conditions are long term – they may last for months or years, or be life-long
- Examples of chronic medical conditions include:
  - Diabetes
  - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
  - Cystic Fibrosis
  - Cancer
  - Chron's Disease
  - Asthma
  - Arthritis
  - Epilepsy
  - HIV/AIDS

### Affects of chronic medical conditions in the workplace

- Chronic medical conditions will have a varied impact on a person's work, and everybody's experience will be different depending on the type of condition, severity, and other factors
- Some examples of ways a chronic medical condition may affect a person in the workplace include:
  - Excessive fatigue
  - Difficulty maintaining concentration
  - Need to take regular breaks
  - Pain
  - Difficulty maintaining regular attendance
  - Intolerance to extreme temperatures

### Reasonable adjustments for chronic medical conditions

- Reasonable adjustments need to be individualised to meet employees' specific needs.
- It is important to **ask** the employee what would be most helpful for them.

- Some examples of reasonable adjustments that may help employees with a chronic medical condition include:
  - Flexible working arrangements
    - Working from home
    - Working part time
    - Flexible start and finish times
  - More frequent and flexible breaks
  - Appropriate air-conditioning
  - Flexible arrangements to attend appointments in working hours
  - Allowing extended periods of unpaid leave for hospital admissions
  - Speech recognition software – e.g. Dragon NaturallySpeaking
  - Appropriate lighting
  - Workstation redesign, including provision of appropriate seating
  - Safe location for medication storage
  - First Aid training of colleagues

## Sources

JobAccess

[http://jobaccess.gov.au/ServiceProviders/Assisting\\_job\\_seekers/Supporting\\_jobseekers\\_with\\_different\\_types\\_of\\_disability/Pages/home.aspx](http://jobaccess.gov.au/ServiceProviders/Assisting_job_seekers/Supporting_jobseekers_with_different_types_of_disability/Pages/home.aspx)

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