

PRIORITY PRODUCT LIST for persons with disabilities during COVID-19



Persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. One in every ten children is a child with disability and an estimated 46 per cent of older people aged 60 years and over are people with disabilities. Of the one billion population of persons with disabilities, 80 per cent live in low resource settings.

They represent a diverse population of people with different impairments and support requirements, who face significant barriers in exercising their rights. Some groups face even greater marginalization - for example persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, persons who are deafblind - who are more likely to be excluded from services, live or be detained in institutions, and experience higher rates of violence, neglect and abuse.

As such, UNICEF has collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) to outline the key products needed to ensure persons and children with disabilities are not left behind in the global response to COVID-19 in line with the recent call to action by the U.N Secretary General. This product list considers three scenarios:

1. UNICEF/WHO country office is supporting government in serving institutions dedicated in full or in part to caring for children or people with disabilities, such as a rehabilitation centres, nurseries, schools with PPE and hygiene supplies
2. Persons with disabilities that have been impacted by loss or reduced access to home and social services supports, including personal assistance.
3. UNICEF/WHO is working with government and local NGOs to support children with mobility or learning issues to access education as part of the Covid-19 response.

This list has identified three main categories - PPE, hygiene & sanitation, and assistive technology - as the highest priorities to ensuring persons and children with disabilities are not left behind during this crisis.

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

Persons with disabilities are at greater risk of developing more severe health conditions and

dying from COVID-19. They have greater health requirements and poorer health outcomes. For example, they are more susceptible to secondary conditions and comorbidities, such as lung problems, diabetes and heart disease, and obesity, which can worsen the outcome of COVID-19 infection. For that reason, and to protect caregivers and health professionals, access to PPE is essential.

Hygiene and Sanitation

Persons with disabilities are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19. They may experience barriers to implement basic protection measures such as hand-washing and maintaining physical distancing for several reasons: lack of accessibility of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities; a reliance on physical contact to get support; inaccessibility of public health information; or being placed in institutional settings which are often overcrowded and unsanitary. These barriers are exacerbated in times of humanitarian emergencies, particularly when personal contact is to be reduced/minimized. For those reasons, targeted access to basic hygiene and sanitation products for persons with disabilities and caregivers are vital in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Assistive Technology (AT)

Access to assistive technology is a pre-requisite for accessing healthcare, education, employment and social protection as well as simply being able to survive independently when access to needed services and care is fragmented or non-existent due to COVID19. Assistive technology is also needed to ensure basic information about COVID19 and its societal impacts reach persons with disability. The crisis not only effects access to needed products, but also everything surrounding these, such as essential spare parts, batteries (for instance for hearing aids), basic service and maintenance etc. For these reasons access to enabling assistive technology and services surrounding them is paramount during COVID19. International supply chains have been disrupted which will make repairs and spare parts harder to come by. UNICEF encourages local innovation to bridge the gap where quality standards are maintained or improved worldwide.

Priority Product List

PPE

- Masks
- Gloves
- Plastic Aprons
- Visors (with headband)

Non-medical masks

- See-through masks that allow for lip-reading

Hygiene & Sanitation

- Toilet paper
- Reusable sanitary pads
- Soap – liquid
- Hand sanitizer
- Catheters*
- Diapers (child, youth and adult sizes)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Antiseptics for cleaning
- Wet antibacterial wipes
- Washing powder and detergent
- Shampoo and shower gel
- Dishwasher soap - liquid
- Disposable paper napkins
- Buckets
- Disability-friendly taps (for handwashing stations and bathrooms)

Assistive Technology

- Device to hold hand-sanitizers on wheelchairs
- Tablets with appropriate software (to support both alternative & augmentative communication [AAC] and low vision/blindness)
- Spare parts for essential AT (specifically for wheelchairs)
- Wheelchairs (including pressure relief cushion and postural support as needed)
- Hearing aids and batteries
- White canes
- Walking canes and rollators
- Reachers/Grabbers
- Magnifiers (hand held and dome) for persons with low vision
- Portable oxygen concentrators/CPAP units

**UNICEF recommends catheters be used by professional health workers to minimize risk of infections and complications*

Photo: In Mauritania, seamstresses at a vocational training centre for women sew cloth masks for persons with disabilities and vulnerable populations to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To date, 12,000 masks have been sewn at the centre as part of the COVID-19 response. © UNICEF/UNI342305/Pouget