

PROTECTING OUR OLDER AUSTRALIANS FROM CORONAVIRUS

COVID-19 FACT SHEET

Seniors are at increased risk of infection and are more vulnerable to complications.

The COVID-19 coronavirus is a health risk for older people. There are a range of precautions that must be taken to protect our seniors, and measures to support this effort.

AGED CARE FACILITIES

The elderly and people with underlying medical conditions (such as diabetes, lung disease, kidney disease or suppressed immunity) are at more risk of severe illness or death if they are exposed to someone with the COVID-19 coronavirus.

There is no vaccine or treatment for people who are infected with COVID-19, so it is crucial that the disease is not introduced to aged care homes.

The best way to protect your relative is to not visit them if you are feeling unwell.

Aged care facilities must take extra precautions when it comes to visits. These include:

- making sure visits are kept short
- allowing no more than two visitors, including doctors, at a time
- making sure visits occur in a resident's room, outdoors, or in a specific area they designate - there should be no visiting in communal areas
- ensuring there are no large group visits or gatherings, including social activities or entertainment

If you cannot visit your family and friends in a residential aged care facility, it's important to keep in touch. Make phone or video calls, send postcards, photos or artwork or film short videos to share.

FAMILIES

The Australian Government has not officially called for Australians over a certain age to avoid social contact, but appropriate social distancing and good hygiene practices can keep your loved ones safe.

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, including before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and wash your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people whenever possible)
- Stop shaking hands, hugging or kissing as a greeting
- Avoid small gatherings in enclosed spaces, for example family celebrations
- Stay home if you are sick and don't expose others. If you are unwell with flu-like symptoms, do not go outside unless essential.

Fast facts...

- The Australian Government's economic response to the COVID-19 coronavirus totals \$189 billion across the forward estimates.
- It is vital that people take health advice from official sources, such as their state or territory health authority and the Australian Department of Health.
- Older Australians are at a higher risk of serious infection, complications and death as a result of COVID-19.
- You can call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.