



What to expect during a COVID-19 outbreak – residents in aged care homes

If someone has COVID-19 in your residential aged care service, a number of changes will take place. These changes will be made very quickly. You might be anxious when these changes take place but the aim is to keep you safe.

The changes you may notice include:



LOCKDOWN

- Visitors will be asked to leave and a lockdown will commence
- You will not be able to leave the building except in special circumstances



INCREASED COMMUNICATIONS

- Staff will keep you informed about what's happening, and if you have questions, you should ask them
- Your family will be contacted and regular communications about the outbreak will be provided
- You will be assisted to communicate with your family and friends
- Signs will be placed outside the room of anyone who has tested positive to COVID-19
- Signs may also divide the building into different zones
- Other signs will confirm that the home is in lockdown and responding to a COVID-19 outbreak



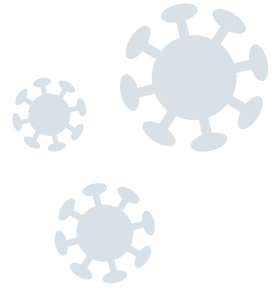
TESTING

- All staff and residents may be tested for the virus
- Tests may need to be repeated as the outbreak is managed or if you start to have symptoms



ISOLATION

- You may be kept completely away from other residents to help protect everyone in the home
- You may be moved temporarily to a different room or location as the staff try to reduce risks to all residents
- You may be asked to use a different bathroom or to wash in your room



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- People will wear special equipment to manage the risk of COVID-19 spreading throughout your home – this may include a gown, gloves, mask and face shield. This is to protect you and others from the spread of the virus
- If you are coughing or have tested positive for COVID-19, you may also be asked to wear a mask
- People in masks look different and it can seem frightening. They will tell you who they are, and you will get used to seeing people like this. They will continue to care for you



INCREASED CLEANING

- Common surfaces will be cleaned more regularly – this includes bedrails, light switches and handrails
- Your room will be cleaned often, while other areas will be cleaned multiple times each day



OTHER CHANGES

- Food may be prepared in a different place and may appear different. You will be served food in your own room
- Trays, cutlery and crockery may be replaced with disposable items
- There will be increased monitoring of your health and well-being – this may include regularly checking your temperature, breathing and looking for other changes in your condition and how you feel
- Different or new staff may temporarily assist with your care and support services – this is because the usual staff may be isolating at home. This may involve more individual care for you if you have particular needs



HOW CAN YOU HELP

- Be understanding that the changes are designed to protect residents and staff. They will likely be temporary
- Ask questions if you are worried about anything
- Remember to wash your hands with soap often and thoroughly; avoid touching your face and mouth; use your elbow or a tissue to cover your cough or sneeze
- Report any symptoms of illness immediately