



Is my aged care service ready for a COVID-19 outbreak?

Questions residents can ask their aged care service provider

6 October 2022

Aged care services are required to take steps to prevent, prepare for and reduce the impact of a COVID-19 outbreak.

You have the right to ask your provider what they are doing to keep you safe.

This fact sheet includes some questions you can ask your residential aged care provider about how prepared they are for a COVID-19 outbreak.

Also included are links to resources from a range of sources to help you with understanding your rights – to feel safe, informed and connected during the pandemic.

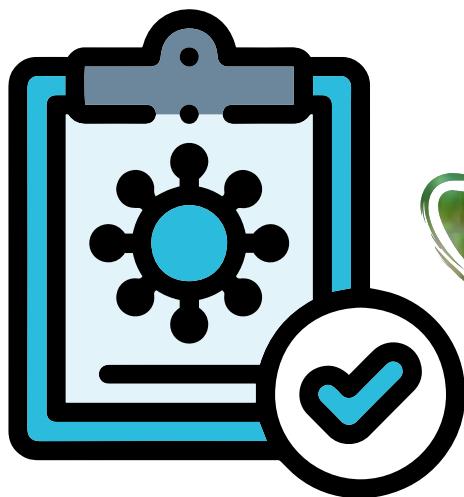
The information may also help you to understand the actions your provider is taking, and how you might be involved.

General COVID-19 information

- **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:**
[COVID-19 consumer resources](#)
- **Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care:**
[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice for people in residential aged care facilities and visitors](#)
- **Older Person's Advocacy Network (OPAN):**
[COVID-19 information](#)
- **Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia:**
[COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) information](#)
- **Dementia Australia:**
[The latest COVID-19 Dementia Australia resources](#)

Other contacts:

- COVID-19 Aged Care Bereavement Support:
Call 1800 222 200 or
email covidagedcare@grief.org.au



How to share concerns

Commission

If you are not happy with how your provider is preparing for or properly managing a COVID-19 outbreak, including visitation rights, you can raise your concerns with the Commission by contacting 1800 951 822 or by using our [Online Complaints Form](#).

Older Person's Advocacy Network (OPAN)

For information on COVID and your aged care rights, and for advocacy support discussing concerns with your provider:
phone 1800 700 600
8am-8pm Mon-Fri | 10am-4pm Sat
www.opan.org.au





Questions you can ask your provider

Q

Do you have an outbreak management plan ready?

- How does the plan ensure my rights are respected?
- Do you regularly test and update your plan?
- How can I be involved in practising the plan?

Q

What impact will a COVID outbreak have on the care I receive?

- Will I still be able to do the things I like to do – inside and outside the facility?
- Will my doctor or other health professional still be able to visit me during an outbreak? If not, what other arrangements will you have in place?
- Will I be able to attend regular medical appointments?
- If I have to leave the facility to attend a medical or other appointment, will I need to isolate when I return?
- What criteria do you use to send residents to hospital?



Q

What are your arrangements for visitors and what changes might occur during an outbreak?

- How do you screen staff and visitors before they enter the service?
- Are screening tests and PPE (such as masks, gowns and gloves) provided for staff and visitors?
- If an outbreak occurs, what is your policy about visitors?
- What advance arrangements do you have in place for Essential Visitors to visit residents during an outbreak?
- Are visits on compassionate grounds allowed during an outbreak e.g. will my family be able to visit me if I am close to the end of life or I am highly distressed and unable to settle?
- How will you ensure I stay connected with my family and friends if not everyone is allowed to visit?
- What do I need to do if I want to leave during an outbreak and go home to family carers?
- If I go home to family carers, what steps are needed for my return after the outbreak?

Key resources

- [COVID-19 restrictions in residential aged care – your rights](#)
- [Partnerships in care: Supporting older people’s wellbeing in residential care](#)
- [Industry Code for Visiting in Aged Care](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Information for Permanent Aged Care Residents – Emergency Leave](#)



Q

How are you ensuring appropriate infection prevention and control?

- What precautions are being taken when a nurse or care worker provides personal care for me?
- How will you protect me from COVID positive residents located near me or sharing my room and bathroom during an outbreak?
- How are staff trained to make sure the care they provide to me in an outbreak is safe?
- How often do you test residents and staff for COVID-19?
- What are the arrangements for cleaning during an outbreak?

Q

How can vaccinations be arranged if I need one?

- When am I eligible for a vaccine or booster shot and how can you arrange for me to have one?
- What are you doing to discuss and answer questions about vaccinations with individual residents and their family members?
- When can I discuss questions about vaccinations with my doctor or staff?



Q

Will I have access to antiviral medications if I have symptoms?

- How can I give my consent in advance?
- What arrangements are in place for a GP to prescribe medication if I test positive?
- What arrangements are in place with local pharmacies to access medication quickly?

Key resources

- [COVID-19 vaccination and antiviral treatments](#)
- [COVID-19 oral treatments information for residents and their families in residential aged care facilities](#)

Q

Will residents need to move rooms or be restricted to their rooms in an outbreak?

- In what circumstances would I be required to stay in my room? Do you have a plan to make this as short a time as possible?
- Will I need to change rooms if there is an outbreak?





Q

How will you get additional staff if needed?

- How will you ensure that any new staff coming into the facility understand my needs? What training will they receive?
- Do you have plans to have staff who are required to isolate perform work from home? Would these staff members check in with residents online?
- What happens if a central services area (such as a kitchen) needs to close?

Q

How will you keep staff, residents and families informed in an outbreak?

- How will my family know whether or not I have COVID-19 during an outbreak?
- How will you keep my family updated about my wellbeing, the status of the facility and how it is responding to COVID-19?
- Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?
- Are my, or my nominated representatives', contact details up to date?





Q

How will you ensure my physical and mental wellbeing is maintained during an outbreak?

- How will you make sure that I receive my medication on time and I'm given regular drinks of water and my meals at the right time?
- How will you help me maintain face-to-face contact or stay in touch with family and friends if that's not possible?
- What interesting/fun activities will you introduce if face-to-face contact with family and friends is not possible?
- What physical activities will you introduce to keep us active?
- Can I access free counselling services?
- Will I continue to receive my physiotherapy/ occupational therapy visits to maintain my mobility and physical wellness?

Key resources

- [Examples of innovations](#) providers have shared to ensure the ongoing health, wellbeing and safety of consumers in their care
- [Connecting over the phone or video call – Activities for children and their elderly relatives](#)
- [How do I stay active and enjoy myself during COVID-19?](#)

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.



Phone

1800 951 822



Web

agedcarequality.gov.au



Write

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