



Is my aged care service ready for an infectious disease outbreak?

Questions residents can ask their aged care service provider about infection prevention and control

November 2023

Aged care services are required to take steps to prevent, prepare for and reduce the impact of an outbreak of infectious illness such as influenza ('flu), gastroenteritis (gastro), and COVID-19.

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 an outbreak.

Also included are links to resources to help you understand your rights and contacts to reach out to if you have questions that have not been answered or you need any other assistance.

General infection prevention and control (IPC) information

- **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:**
[IPC consumer resources](#)
- **Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care:**
[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice for people in residential aged care facilities and visitors](#)

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 have concerns with your provider's handling of infectious illness outbreaks, or any other issues, you can contact the Commission on 1800 951 822. For further information about making a complaint or reporting any issues please refer to our [online complaints section](#).

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 and clinical staff about infection prevention and control and outbreak management

Infection prevention procedures and policies

- How are you ensuring appropriate infection prevention and control in your service?
- Do you have an outbreak management plan ready?
- Do you screen staff and visitors before they enter the service?
- Do you educate residents and visitors on infection prevention control?
- When I am eligible for a vaccine or booster shot will you arrange for me to have one?
- Do you discuss vaccinations with individual residents and their family members?
- How can I give my consent for vaccinations in advance?
- What arrangements are in place for a GP to prescribe medication if I get the 'flu or test positive to COVID-19?
- Will I have access to antiviral medications if I have symptoms?
- Will I be able to attend regular medical appointments?
- What arrangements are in place with local pharmacies to access medication quickly?

Infection control procedures in event of an outbreak

- How are staff trained to make sure the care they provide to me in an outbreak is safe?
- How will you protect me from residents who are infectious and who are located near me, or sharing my room and bathroom, during an outbreak?
- Will residents need to move rooms or be restricted to their rooms in an outbreak?
- How will you ensure that any unfamiliar staff coming into the facility understand my needs?
- What are the arrangements for cleaning during an outbreak?
- If an outbreak occurs, what is your policy about visitors?
- How will you make sure that I receive my medications when they are due, and I am given regular fluids and my meals on time?
- What physical activities will you introduce to keep me active?

Key resources

- Partnerships in care: [Supporting older people's wellbeing in residential care](#)
- Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia current [Industry Code for Visiting in Aged Care](#)
- [COVID-19 and influenza vaccination and antiviral treatments](#)

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

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819, in your capital city