



Visiting aged care facilities

24 November 2020

Visits are now allowed at all Victorian residential aged care facilities.

However, there are still measures in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in an aged care facility. Please be aware that individual facilities may implement additional safety measures regarding visitations.

You can visit a residential aged care facility

From 23 November 2020, there are no restrictions on visits to residential aged care facilities. However, to keep visits safe, there are some general rules you must follow.

Visitors must:

- wear a fitted face mask (this includes anyone aged 12 and older)
- visit only the resident and follow instructions from staff regarding what areas of the facility you can access
- keep at least 1.5 metres away from everyone at the facility, including the resident, while visiting
 - if you cannot do this, for example if you help the resident with eating, you may be directed by staff to wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - follow staff instructions to prevent crowding and ensure physical distancing.
- wash or sanitise your hands regularly and as directed by staff.

Visitors are encouraged to have an up-to-date influenza vaccination.

Declarations

All visitors must make a declaration that they:

- do not have any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
- are not a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- are not currently required to quarantine or isolate.

You must not visit the facility if you:

- are unwell or have even the mildest symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), such as:
 - fever or temperature over 37.5 degrees
 - loss or change in sense of smell or taste, chills or sweats, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, and/or runny nose
- have coronavirus (COVID-19) and you are currently required to isolate
- have been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19) within the last 14 days and you are currently required to quarantine
- have been tested for coronavirus (COVID-19) and have not yet received your result
- arrived in Australia from overseas in the last 14 days.

What if I can't visit in person?

Aged care facilities must take reasonable steps to help residents use alternative contact methods to communicate with people who cannot visit them, like phone and video calls.

Example: The Lim Family

Mr Lim is an aged care resident and receives a weekly visit from his son and daughter-in-law.

His son becomes unwell and cannot visit. A telephone call is not suitable because Mr Lim requires hearing aids. A facetime video call is organised so Mr Lim can catch up with family while his son is unwell. During this call, staff provide time and assistance to Mr Lim to support the weekly conversation.

This weekly family time is now scheduled and available each week improving Mr Lim's emotional wellbeing and maintaining family connection.

Areas with higher restrictions

If there is an active coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in the area or in the facility itself, there might be stricter rules based on public health advice. This is hard for residents and families, but it helps keep everyone safe.

Visitors should contact the facility before visiting to check what is allowed and safe in your area.

Residents can leave facilities

Under current restriction levels, residents can leave their facilities for any reason, provided they comply with [current restrictions](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/) <<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/>> in Victoria.

When residents leave the facility, they should be reminded of the current restrictions and public health advice, including:

- physical distancing (maintaining 1.5m distance from others)
- wearing a fitted face mask when indoors, and when you cannot maintain 1.5m distance outdoors. This means carrying a mask with you at all times.
- observing limits on private and public gatherings
- not seeing or visit people who are unwell
- not visiting people who are in quarantine or isolation.

Excursions

Travel in vehicles, such as minibuses, for group outings can occur. Face masks should be worn while in the vehicle.

Travel on public transport is allowed. Strict physical distancing and other measures should be observed (such as wearing a face mask, maintaining hand hygiene, etc).

The destination for any excursion must also be permitted by the public health directions.

For more information about permitted activities visit [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roadmap for reopening](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions-roadmaps) <<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions-roadmaps>>

Returning to the facility

Residents will be screened upon their return to their facility, for example by having their temperature checked, just like any other person entering the facility.

Assistance for residents and visitors

Facilities are required to take into account residents' physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing when implementing infection prevention and control measures to protect residents and limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

In the first instance, concerns should be raised with the management of the facility.

If you are not comfortable to talk to the facility management directly, or you are not happy with their response, you can talk to the **Older Persons Advocacy Network** (OPAN) who have trained advocates who can provide advice and support to resolve concerns with the provider. OPAN can be contacted on 1800 700 600 or visit the [OPAN website](http://www.opan.com.au) <opan.com.au>

If this discussion does not resolve the matter, you can contact the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission** to make a complaint. You can contact the Commission through the [Making a complaint webpage](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint) <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint> or on 1800 951 822 (toll free) .

To find out more information about coronavirus and how to stay safe visit
[Coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)
<www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/>

If you need an interpreter, call the coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline 1800 675 398 and press 0.

For information in other languages, scan the QR code or visit
[DHHS.vic –Translated resources - coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources-coronavirus-disease-covid-19)
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>



For any questions
Coronavirus hotline 1800 675 398 (24 hours)
Please keep Triple Zero (000) for emergencies only

To receive this document in another format phone 1300 651 160 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Emergency Management Communications](mailto:COVID-19@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <COVID-19@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

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Available at: [DHHS.vic – coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus) <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>