



SIX STEPS TO STOP THE SPREAD FOR FAMILIES AND VISITORS

Thank you to all the families and loved ones of older Australians for your support and cooperation. It is so important during this difficult time.

We know COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on older people. We are working harder than ever to ensure your loved ones are safe in their aged care services.

The safety and well-being of vulnerable and elderly Australians is our absolute priority.

The following information will help you protect older Australians from COVID-19.

Further information is available at the [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au) website under the “resources section”. I also encourage you to read the Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes during COVID-19 at <https://www.cota.org.au/policy/aged-care-reform/agedcarevisitors/>.

We must continue to protect the rights of people receiving aged care, consistent with the Aged Care Charter of Rights. You can find the charter at <https://www.health.gov.au/news/charter-of-aged-care-rights>.

SIX STEPS TO STOP THE SPREAD:

You can stop the spread and keep safe by following ALL six steps

1. Are you feeling well?

You must stay at home and not visit anyone if you are feeling unwell. You must do this even if your symptoms are very mild. The symptoms of COVID-19 may be like a cold or flu and can include:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- headache
- loss of smell
- loss of taste
- runny nose
- muscle pain
- joint pain
- diarrhoea
- nausea/vomiting
- loss of appetite

2. Is your *flu vaccination* up to date?

If you wish to visit a residential aged care facility you must be vaccinated against the flu. You must provide evidence of up to date flu vaccination. If you cannot be vaccinated you must provide proof of a medical exemption from your treating doctor. We also recommend you get vaccinated if you are visiting older relatives and friends in their own homes.

3. Do you know how to make your visit as *safe* as possible?

To help reduce the risks of spreading COVID-19, we recommend you:

- wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser:
 - » at the beginning and end of your visit
 - » before and after you have contact with a resident, such as to help them with their meal
 - » at regular intervals throughout the day

- show evidence you and all visitors with you have received the 2020 flu vaccination
- cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, put used tissues in the bin straight away, and wash your hands
- no more than two visitors at a time per resident
- visit your relative in their room, an outdoor area, or an area specified by the facility
- avoid communal areas
- practise physical distancing whenever possible

You cannot visit if in the past 14 days you have:

- returned from overseas or
- had close contact with someone with COVID-19

You should already be in quarantine or isolation and not be visiting anyone.

All staff and visitors should supply up to date contact details to the aged care facility.

4. Do you have children visiting with you?

You need to check if children are able to visit with you before you go to the RACF. If they are allowed, you need to supervise the children who are with you and make sure they follow physical distancing and hygiene advice.

5. Do you know the rules that apply to your loved one's facility?

Each service provider is being asked to communicate with residents and families about the rules around visits. They need to keep you up to date with any changes. You will need to:

- give honest answers to screening questions about your COVID-19 risk
- show evidence of a 2020 flu vaccination
- follow the rules for visitors

You should check your state or territory government's advice as requirements may differ for aged care services and the public.

6. Do you know how to stay in touch with your loved one if access is restricted?

Sometimes a provider may need to restrict access. For example, if there were an outbreak in a facility or in the local area.

We encourage aged care providers and relatives to work together to help you keep in touch with your loved ones.

If you have concerns about visits or the care of a friend or family member, contact:

- Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on 1800 700 600 or
- visit their website at www.opan.com.au.

OPAN can work with you and the aged care provider. This service is free and confidential. Alternatively, you can contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) on 1800 951 822 or at www.agedcarequality.gov.au.

If you have any concerns about the mental health of a friend or family member call the free COVID-19 support line for Senior Australians on 1800 171 866.

We need your help

The COVIDSafe app is completely voluntary. Downloading the app is something you can do to help protect your family, friends and community. You can help save the lives of other Australians including those you care for. The more Australians connect to the COVIDSafe app, the quicker we can find the virus.

For all official information, resources and guidance, visit www.health.gov.au