COVID-19 and aged care facilities: Guide for GPs

## This fact sheet aims to provide COVID-related information and resources that may be useful to GPs who care for people living in aged care facilities.

We have also provided a fact sheet to aged care facilities, which includes suggestions on engaging with visiting GPs about their facility’s outbreak prevention, preparedness and management activities.

## Communicating with aged care facilities

### Collate a list of the patients you have in each aged care facility.

### Communication between aged care facilities and general practice

Please complete the *General practice and aged care facility COVID-19 communication* form with your preferred contact details and preparedness to assess and manage your aged care patients if they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19. PHT will collate this information and share it with your nominated aged care facilities. You will soon receive an email from provider support with a link to the form, alternatively you can access the form via this link [bit.ly/35rB8e4](https://bit.ly/35rB8e4)

### Ask to be involved in the development or review of each facility’s Outbreak Management Plan.

* Practise a desktop scenario with the facility to test their Respiratory Illness (COVID-19 and Influenza) Outbreak Management Plan (example scenarios below).

### Ensure your practice and the aged care facility are telehealth-ready.

* Access our ‘Telehealth tips and tricks’ webinar recording at [bit.ly/2DpqmJc](https://bit.ly/2DpqmJc)
* Visit [www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/for-health-professionals/novel-coronavirus-response/](https://www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/for-health-professionals/novel-coronavirus-response/) and follow the instructions for the healthirect Video Call pilot if you would like to set up the Video Call platform in your general practice. The Video Call platform can be used on mobile phones, tablets, and PCs with webcams and a microphone.

## Example scenarios to consider as part of your planning

### Resident positive for COVID-19

A nurse in the aged care facility has just received a phone call from the pathology laboratory to say Mrs Jones’ swab test is positive for COVID-19.

Mrs Jones has had a worsening cough and fever for two days. The swab was taken yesterday. She is in Room 4. Now that the nurse thinks about it, he noticed one of the other nursing staff coughing this morning at handover and night staff were concerned about two other residents feeling a “bit off”.

### Staff member positive for COVID-19

A staff member (carer) was sent home from work two days ago mid-shift. The staff member had a sore throat three days ago but did not want to mention it during their shift because they thought it would be difficult to replace them. The next day the sore throat persisted, and they developed a cough.

The staff member has just called to say they had a test and it was positive for COVID-19.

### Frequent attender positive for COVID-19

The husband of a long-term resident called to say he won’t be in today because he had a test for COVID-19 and it is positive. He visits the facility every day and is there from breakfast to after dinner. He is a great help when he is there, often making cups of tea and talking to residents who do not receive many visitors.

## Key information and resources

* The Australian Government has detailed the steps to be followed by aged care facilities if there is a COVID-19 positive case. *First 24 hours – managing COVID-19 in residential aged care facilities*   
  [bit.ly/3k5eNXv](https://bit.ly/3k5eNXv)
* Links to useful resources for aged care workers including the Tasmanian Government’s *COVID-19 Outbreaks in Residential Aged Care Facilities: Toolkit to support planning, preparedness and response* [bit.ly/3k5f7FH](https://bit.ly/3k5f7FH)
* *CDNA national guidelines for the prevention, control and public health management of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential care facilities in Australia* [bit.ly/32fzUR0](https://bit.ly/32fzUR0)
* The *COVID-19 Assessment and Management in Aged Residential Care* ***Tasmanian HealthPathway*** provides information for preparing, preventing, assessing and managing a suspected or confirmed case in a residential aged care facility   
  <https://tasmania.communityhealthpathways.org/> (username: connectingcare and password: health)

# Get in touch

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