

Information for visitors to residential aged care facilities

This factsheet will help you understand the restrictions on visiting residential aged care facilities in South Australia, and how you can still keep in touch with your family and friends.

These measures have been put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep vulnerable members of our community well.

Visiting restrictions

Due to COVID-19, the State Coordinator made a [Direction](#) under the *Emergency Management Act 2004* to limit entry into residential aged care facilities in South Australia.

Until further notice, the **following people are not permitted** to enter a residential aged care facility:

- > those who have returned from outside South Australia (whether from overseas or interstate) in the last 14 days
- > those who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days (unless adequate personal protective equipment was worn)
- > those with fever (>38) or symptoms of acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath)
- > those who have not received their 2020 seasonal influenza vaccination (unless the person has a medical contraindication to the flu vaccine)
- > children aged 16 years or less, except for the purposes of providing end of life support to a resident.

A **resident who leaves** a residential aged care facility is also prohibited from returning to the premises, except in the following circumstances:

- > to seek medical or dental treatment
- > to attend the funeral of a member of their immediate family
- > the resident has dementia or another cognitive impairment and inadvertently leave the premises without understanding the Direction of the consequences of leaving
- > the resident would have no safe alternative accommodation.

When visiting a residential aged care facility, the following guidelines should be followed:

- > visits must be of short duration
- > care and support visits (for example, visits by family members, close friends or advocacy support) are limited to one visit per day of one person, or two people at once
- > visits must only occur in a resident's room, outdoors or in a specific area designated by the facility (not a communal space)
- > no large group visits or gatherings, including group social activities or group entertainment are permitted
- > no school groups of any size are allowed to visit residential aged care facilities
- > social distancing of 1.5m should be adhered to wherever possible.

These measures have been put in place as a precaution to ensure vulnerable older South Australians continue to remain safe from COVID-19. **It is important that all visitors continue to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and follow the guidance of the facility about how and when visits can be undertaken.**

Flu vaccination requirements

From 1 May 2020, to visit a residential aged care facility in South Australia you must be vaccinated against seasonal influenza.

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- > The only exception to this requirement is a person who has a medical contraindication to the flu vaccine (such as a person who has a history of anaphylaxis or has had Guillain-Barré Syndrome following vaccination, or who is taking check point inhibitor medication for cancer treatment).
- > Visitors will be asked to provide evidence of their immunisation status when visiting – appropriate evidence may include a statement or record from a health practitioner, or an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

Compassionate visits

Visits for the purpose of providing end of life support to a resident are permitted and may also include children under the aged of 16 years. Operators of residential aged care facilities have been asked to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place so that residents can still see their loved ones at this time.

- > Relatives and friends who travel from outside of South Australia to provide end of life support to a resident are permitted to visit a residential aged care facility within 14 days of entering the state, provided that they self-quarantine during any period during which they are not on the premises of the facility.

Staying in touch

Even if you cannot visit or you have to reduce the amount that you visit aged care facilities, you can still stay in touch with family and friends.

Instead of visiting why not write a letter, send an email or call, Skype or Facetime?

If you are visiting

- > Follow all instructions given by staff of the facility about how and when visits can take place.
- > Practice social distancing. This means keeping 1.5 metres between yourself and other people whenever possible.
- > Practice good hand hygiene – wash them regularly with soap and water or an alcohol based rub.
- > Practice proper coughing etiquette – cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue.

Further information

- > Advice for family members and visitors can be found at: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-families-and-residents-on-restricted-visits-to-residential-aged-care-facilities
- > Call the National Coronavirus Help Line on 1800 020 080.

For more information

Information updated 29 April 2020

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019

