



Coronavirus COVID-19

Tips for residential care providers

Information for residential aged care providers regarding coronavirus COVID-19 and supporting people living with dementia.

In addition to the infection control measures aged care providers are implementing in response to coronavirus COVID-19, the following outlines some considerations for people living with dementia. Some initial suggestions have been provided below and more detailed information is available through contacting the **Centre for Dementia Learning** on **1300 DEMENTIA** or the **National Dementia Helpline** on **1800 100 500**

Impacts for residents

Limited ability to understand the information they are receiving about coronavirus COVID-19, which could lead to a range of responses, including fear and anxiety.

- Ensure information provided is from authoritative source (e.g. Commonwealth Department of Health)
- Minimise flow of media information by turning off the 24-hour news cycle on TV
- Provide information and explanation to residents who are aware and concerned
- Use memory aids and reminders about washing hands and reason for masks and infection control measures
- Take the time to listen to the person and their concerns
- Validate how the person is feeling
- Provide reassurance



- Make sure regular time is spent with residents to ask how they are going and if they have any questions
- Minimise staff discussion and anxiety/opinions in front of residents

Limited ability to understand and adhere to any infection control measures introduced as a result of coronavirus COVID-19

- Staff may need to provide people living with dementia with additional support to ensure infection control procedures are adhered to.
- People living with dementia may need extra support to maintain proper hand hygiene. The following five tips relate specifically to this:
 - Consider placing dementia friendly instructional signs in bathrooms and elsewhere to remind people with dementia to wash their hands with soap for at least 20 seconds.
 - Give a demonstration of thorough hand washing. Consider singing a song to encourage them to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.
 - If the person with dementia cannot get to a sink to wash their hands, hand sanitiser or anti-bacterial hand wipes may be a quick alternative. Hand sanitiser is only effective if hands are not visibly dirty.
 - Encourage them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, instead of into their hands and ensure the tissue is then discarded in the bin.
 - More tips on hand washing can be found at www.healthdirect.gov.au/hand-washing or on the World Health Organization website: www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/



Reduced activities and social interaction, including reduced visitors, as a result of infection control measures

- Consider creating a buddy system between residents or between residents and staff to strengthen support networks
- Look at maintaining social support through smaller groups with social distancing principles where feasible (e.g. meetings in larger spaces or outside)
- Encourage music and singing so that others can join in
- Use the overhead speakers to play interactive games (bingo could work)
- Encourage regular opportunity to walk outside and exercise
- Schedule regular periods outside for the resident, especially where this is part of their usual routine

Emerging or changed behaviour due to isolation, change of care routine, reduced social contact and activities

- For residents whose usual routine is to walk around the service independently, provide regular walks and access to outdoors
- Encourage participating in everyday activities when providing one on one care
- Maintain regular routine as much as possible
- Keep residents active to avoid boredom and reduce napping during the day
- Seek to respond to changed behaviours in a timely way should they emerge
- Use non-pharmacological approaches to respond to changed or heightened behaviours
- Use visual prompts to remind residents of restricted access
- Apply a sequenced problem-solving approach to changed behaviours (e.g. CAUSEd - for more on that, see www.dementialearning.org.au/ search for behaviours)
- Maximise access to natural light



How to support continued engagement with families and carers

- Discourage visiting to your service if the visitor is unwell
- Encourage visitors to maintain strict hygiene measures
- Encourage visitors to adhere to social distancing of 1.5 metres where possible
- Try to conduct visits in a resident's room, outdoors or in a specific designated area at the facility and not in communal areas to minimise the risk of transmission
- Ensure information provided to family and friends is from authoritative source
- Provide reassurance to visitors about the infection control measures you have in place
- Try to arrange other means of communication – iPad, facetime, skype, google nest, phone calls, social media messaging if applicable
- Provide other activities such as colouring-in, magazines, folding, sock matching, movies, talking books
- Encourage local school children to write letters or draw pictures to send to residents
- Communicate with families through a variety of communication channels what the infection control measures are in relation to coronavirus COVID-19 and where to go for further information
- Maintain open communication with residents and their families
- Be understanding and listen to concerns of family and residents
- Try to respond in a timely manner
- Escalate to supervisor if unable to answer questions or concerns
- Understand this is a stressful time for everyone



For further advice contact our contact **National Dementia Helpline** on **1800 100 500**

The Centre for Dementia Learning has a comprehensive range of education programs to help aged care providers address many of the issues raised above. For further details contact **1300 DEMENTIA**.

The above information was based on information provided by Alzheimer's Disease Chinese (ADC) and shared by Alzheimer's Disease International. You can find the full presentation here: www.alz.co.uk/news/covid-19-sharing-experience-and-advice-from-adis-member-association-in-china

The coronavirus situation is rapidly evolving. This information is provided as a guide only and may not be appropriate for every situation. For up to date information on the coronavirus, visit www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert

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