

Keeping Safe at home during the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020

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Important Message

A serious virus is spreading in our community and around the world. It is called COVID-19.

We all must work together to prevent the spread of this virus. The government has said we must stay at home. We must all listen to this advice.

The new rules are:

- Only go out if it is necessary (for food, medical reasons or work).
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people at all times.
- Wash your hands often.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus that has been spreading around the globe. COVID is short for Coronavirus Disease, and 19 is short for 2019, which is the year it was recognised as a highly infectious disease.

The virus has spread to many people, in all parts of the world, and is therefore referred to as a pandemic.

How does the virus spread?

The World Health Organisation says that COVID-19:

“can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales.”

“These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.”

Why is it spreading so fast?

In today's world, many people travel, making it easier for a virus to spread to communities large and small, across the globe. Also, not everyone that has COVID-19 shows symptoms, so they are passing it on without knowing.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms include cough, fever, fatigue and difficulty breathing.

The biggest challenge is that people may not know they have the virus, because it can take up to 14 days before they have the symptoms. So, everyone is being asked to stay at a

distance, to make sure we keep everyone as safe as possible.

How do I protect myself?

There are 3 main things that you can do to keep yourself safe, and stop the spread of COVID-19.

1.

We all need to do our part to wash away and kill the germs that could be carried on our hands. During this time of heightened precaution, it is important for **EVERYONE** to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap or use hand sanitiser often – and that includes you. You could sing “Happy Birthday” twice, while washing our hands to reach the 20 seconds goal or sing “I’m

gonna wash those germs right outta my hands!”

2.

Keep 2 metres away from other people. Infection control experts also say that social gestures such as shaking hands and hugging must stop during this time. Since we are firmly being told to avoid shaking hands, we need to find other ways to let people know that we care. So, smile brightly or wave from afar and let everyone know you are happy to see them.

3.

If you need to cough or sneeze, make sure you catch it in your elbow. Or if you use a tissue, throw it in the bin and wash your hands.

What if I'm worried about my health?

If you have questions about your health, it is best to **call** your doctor, rather than just show up at the doctor's office or the hospital, where you are at more risk of getting infected. You can also call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 for advice.

What we all need to do

Since this virus is now spreading, and affecting more and more people (especially older people and people with underlying health conditions), governments around the world have been taking advice from world health leaders and establishing action plans to help stop the virus from spreading.

If we slow down the rate of infection, then our health systems can support and treat people with COVID-19.

The most important message from our Prime Minister is that everyone must stay at home, unless they are required to work. This means that

all people – all families – have been told to stay at home until health experts say it is safe to be with others.

There are many new rules in place across Australia. These rules will continue to be in place until leading health experts advise us that it is okay to once again gather together.

Many shops have closed although essential shops remain open. Supermarkets, grocery stores and pharmacies are open, because we all need food and many need medications.

The government has said that it is okay to leave the house to get groceries or to pick up necessities

at the pharmacy, but these trips should be limited to once a week.

Everyone is having to adopt new daily routines. Places where the public can gather have been closed. No sports or team games are being played. If you have tried to watch your favourite sport on television, you will know that there are no current games on TV.

Families and friends are not allowed to visit each other but they can use their phone or new technology such as a computer, mobile phone or tablet, such as an iPad. This new technology will allow people to see each other on the screen as they talk.

While talking on the phone or on a computer, iPad or tablet isn't the same as being together, it is what everyone – young and old – must do right now.

In Australia, it is okay to take a walk alone, with one other person, or with members of your household, as long as you stay 2 metres away from other walkers.

It is also okay to provide care or to help a vulnerable person, as long as you follow the health department's guidelines related to physical distancing and hygiene.

If a person is admitted to a hospital, because of COVID-19, they will notice that staff are wearing

protective clothing to ensure the virus does not pass from one person to another. Everyone has to be very careful.

You may find that if you have care providers coming to help you in your home, they will wear protective clothing. This special protection is used to keep everyone – including you – as safe as possible.

Health and Social care workers are amongst the greatest heroes during these difficult days. They are doing their best to care for everyone who needs care and support. We also need to recognise that **everyone** who is working in hospitals, home care or care homes also need to be recognised and thanked. For

example, the cleaning staff, catering staff and maintenance staff are all playing their part.

As a society we need to say thank you to these brave and exhausted people.

We also need to thank those who continue to make sure we have food, medicines, and essential services such as gas, electricity and water, in our community.

These new rules have been put in place to keep people away from each other. Staying away from people is called social distancing or physical distancing. It is important to follow the guidelines provided by the health department, to ensure you are safe from the spread of the COVID-19 germs.

To find out more information, you can look at the government website www.australia.gov.au

No one knows how long these new rules will be in place. Let's all work together to keep our distance and do our part to stop the virus from spreading.

Stay at home

**When you go out – keep
your distance**

Tell family not to visit

Stay safe

Keep well

Note:

The purpose of this book is to help people living with dementia learn about COVID-19, according to what is known at the time of writing this document. It also includes details about what we are all being advised to do to stop the spread of the virus (according to local, regional, federal and international health experts and politicians). It is not intended to provide advice – and may not include the most up-to-date information, as the details are constantly changing. To keep abreast of current details, please refer to the World Health Organization website, public health websites, local, provincial and federal government websites and other reputable websites that contain updated information.

