

COVID-19

Questions and Answers

{Insert the name of your village}

What is COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases. COVID-19 is the disease caused by a new coronavirus. It was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City in China. It has now become a global pandemic.

Why is this virus so dangerous for older people?

The risk of serious illness from COVID-19 increases with age. The highest rate of fatalities is among older people, particularly those with other serious health conditions or a weakened immune system. There is currently no cure or vaccine for COVID-19, or immunity in the community.

For people living with dementia or some form of cognitive impairment, the ability to follow instruction or to alert others about potential symptoms may be a challenge. This is especially so where there is a limited capacity to communicate verbally or express pain and discomfort. In this situation, observation by someone who knows the person with dementia may assist in identifying changes in their health.

Can I still have contact with friends and family?

The Australian Government is advising everyone to practise “social distancing”, which means less contact between you and other people to help slow the spread of the disease. If you are an older person (60+ years of age), you should consider limiting physical contact with other people, especially young children, and avoiding large groups of people.

You may wish to limit your visitors to one or two people per day, and limit the duration of visits. This will help protect you and help stop the spread of disease.

It’s possible that children and young people may be carriers of COVID-19 but show no symptoms, making it extremely difficult to tell if it’s safe for them to visit an older relative. A chat over the phone, video call or email - rather than visits in person – is a good precaution and could help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Should I continue to visit older friends and relatives?

It is important to keep up-to-date with and follow Australian Government advice. For the latest advice and information go to www.health.gov.au.

If visiting older family and friends is not possible, keep in touch via phone and video calls, send postcards, photos or artwork, or film short videos to share. This will limit your exposure to COVID-19 and your chances of accidentally spreading it to other older people in your life.

If you regularly visit someone living with a cognitive impairment, considering other ways of maintaining social contact will help reassure individuals who may feel anxious about possible changes to their day to day life. You can also contact the National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500.

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What does social distancing mean?

It means less contact between you and other people. The coronavirus most likely spreads from person-to-person through:

- Close contact with a person who has COVID-19
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with COVID-19, and then touching your mouth or face.

What are common sense social distancing actions I can take to help stop the spread of coronavirus?

- Wash your hand regularly and thoroughly
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Avoid hugs, kisses and shaking hands
- As far as possible keep a distance of 1.5m from others
- Regularly disinfect surfaces that are regularly touched (tables, benches, doorknobs)
- Increase ventilation in your home by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning
- Visit shops sparingly and consider whether outings are sensible and necessary

Insert other questions as they could be asked in your community

Will the village bus still take us to the supermarket and our appointments?

Will the hairdresser still be open?

Can I order meals from the dining room and are you closing the café?

Are all our activities cancelled?

Is the swimming pool, library, gym, workshop, community centre, bar closed?

Are we still having our bridge, snooker game that is only a few of us?

Can I still pop in to see the Village Manager in the office?