

COVID-19 monitoring recommendations for staff and residents in aged residential care

The Ministry of Health recommends that active screening of residents and health care workers be implemented in order to protect them from COVID-19. This includes:

- daily screening of all residents in aged residential care (ARC) identifies people who need more frequent assessments or to potentially be limited to the resident's unit or a specific room.
- rapidly identifying illness so appropriate of infection prevention and control practices can be implemented.
- daily screening of staff to identify workers who should not be permitted entry.

More information on COVID-19 is available at the bottom of this document.

Resident screening

The following daily screening of residents is recommended to prevent COVID-19 from entering the facility.

1. Fever: resident temperature should be taken and recorded in their chart; since fever may not be a common symptom in older people, an additional method of monitoring could include vital signs and pulse oximetry daily.
2. Respiratory symptoms including:
 - new or worsening cough,
 - sore throat,
 - new shortness of breath,
 - sneezing and runny nose,
 - temporary loss of smell.

If a resident has a fever or any of the symptoms listed above, they should be restricted to their room with the door closed. Increased monitoring of fever and symptoms should be performed until a doctor can assess them. If there are multiple residents with symptoms, limit those residents to a wing or building if possible.

Staff and clinician screening

Any staff feeling unwell should stay home. Daily screening should be performed on all staff and clinicians.

The following daily screening of staff and clinicians as they enter the ARC facility at the beginning of their shift or rounds/consultation will help prevent COVID-19 from entering the facility:

1. Fever: measure temperature with thermometer
2. Respiratory symptoms including:
 - a. New or worsening cough,
 - b. sore throat,
 - c. new shortness of breath.

If a staff member or clinician:

- has a fever or any of the respiratory symptoms listed above, they should be asked to go home and call Healthline. The employee's supervisor should be notified
- does not have fever or respiratory symptoms listed above, instruct the individual to wash their hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser on entry
- becomes unwell during their shift, they should immediately put on a face mask, notify their supervisor and go home.

Screening of visitors entering the building for compassionate care/palliative care

Assess if the individual attending the sensitive setting is at risk of COVID-19. Ask the following questions of all attendees entering the sensitive setting:

1. Have you travelled overseas in the last 14 days?
2. Have you had close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
3. Do you have a new illness, especially a fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath or other respiratory symptoms?

If the person answers YES to question 1 or question 2 the person should be in quarantine (self-isolation) and must not enter the facility under any circumstances.

If a person answers YES to question 3 they should be advised they cannot enter the facility and should seek medical assessment if they have not already done so.

General reminders for all residents, staff, and visitors

Remind all residents, staff, and visitors to do the following:

- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser regularly.
- Don't shake hands or touch individuals during visits.
- Visitors permitted entry for compassionate care situations must wear a face mask while in the building.

Information on COVID-19

What is coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and how is it spread?

COVID-19 is a new viral disease that has resulted in a global pandemic. The virus can be spread from person to person from infected people through coughing, sneezing or by germs on hands.

What are the symptoms and who is at risk?

Most patients have had fever, cough and shortness of breath. Patients with more severe disease have had evidence of pneumonia (chest infection). This is changing quickly and readers are referred to the Ministry of Health's website listed below. The elderly and people with underlying illnesses (such as diabetes, lung disease, kidney disease or suppressed immunity) are at risk of severe illness or death if they get COVID-19.

More information

For the latest advice, information and resources go to:

[Ministry of Health COVID-19 webpage](#)

[Unite against COVID-19 website](#)

For specific questions about a resident or staff member's health related to COVID-19, call Healthline 0800 358 5453. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

