

Dear Client,

No doubt you are now aware of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and would have come across the many stories making headlines across the country every day. At Whiddon, we are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of residents, clients and team members under our care.

In light of the current Coronavirus situation, we are listening to the experts and taking important actions to reduce the risk of exposure to the virus. The information below is important and we ask that you please take the time to read it through. As a community, there are steps that we can all take together to control the spread of Coronavirus.

What should I be aware of as a Whiddon Community Care client?

As a Community Care client at Whiddon, it is important that you tell us if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has been confirmed to have COVID-19, or who has recently visited a country that is high risk. It is important that you tell us this, in the interest of public health, and for your own health and wellbeing and that of your Whiddon carer. You can provide this advice by calling us on **1300 738 388**.

It is important that you read through the information below and stay up to date with the latest advice and restrictions issued by government authorities.

We also encourage you to not visit our aged care homes at this time, unless you are visiting a family member.

Important information on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not previously been identified in humans and scientists are still learning about how it is spread, its severity and other characteristics of the virus.

As the number of cases around the world continues to climb, it is important to monitor and follow advice from the Australian Government, NSW Health, QLD Health and the World Health Organisation, and take steps to control the spread of the virus.

Older people are more vulnerable and at a higher risk of serious disease from COVID-19. It is important that any visitors you plan to welcome into your home advice you prior if:

- They have been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Have come into contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Are at high risk of the virus through recent overseas travel

Isolation restrictions apply and it is important that these visitors do not visit you unless cleared to do so. Please note that these may be updated at any time, so it is important that you check the latest advice. You can find further information and advice on COVID-19 via the following web sites:

<https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx>

If you are visiting one of our aged care homes, we ask that you help us to keep our residents, families, employees and visitors safe by taking steps such as regularly washing your hands, avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms and **not visiting any aged care home if you are unwell.**

As the flu season is just around the corner, we also encourage you to speak with your GP early about getting a flu vaccination to protect you and your loved ones, and to continue to take precautions to control the spread of viruses.

Who is at most at risk for COVID-19?

The people most at risk of getting the virus are those who have:

- Recently been in mainland China or Iran (you should self-isolate for 14 days)
- Italy or South Korea (if you have visited there, or transited through, will not be able to visit our homes for at least 14 days from the day of arrival back in Australia).
- Japan, Mongolia and any other countries of interest, you should monitor your health for symptoms and visit your GP immediately if you develop symptoms.
- Have been in close contact with someone who is a confirmed case of coronavirus

It is essential that you follow advice and any isolation requirements if you are at risk from any of the above.

Steps you can take to help limit the spread

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Keep away from other people and cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow
- Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms
- Stay home if you are sick

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 may have a fever, cough, runny nose, shortness of breath and other symptoms. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia with severe acute respiratory distress. As always if you are unwell and concerned about your health please seek advice from a medical practitioner.

Please be advised that this communication is not meant to be alarmist, rather we just want to ensure that we are taking the best preventative steps to protect all those connected with our homes and services.

If you need to contact us about any of the above, or have any concerns or questions, please contact us on 1300 738 388. There is also a 24-hour Coronavirus Health Information Line should you wish to discuss any concerns. You can contact them on **1800 020 080.**